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THE WORKS OF
CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

THE WORKS OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

EDITED BY E. V. LUCAS

I. MISCELLANEOUS PROSE 1798-1834

II. ELIA AND THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA

III. BOOKS FOR CHILDREN.

IV. DRAMATIC SPECIMENS AND THE GARRICK PLAYS

V. POEMS AND PLAYS

VI. LETTERS 1796-1820

VII. LETTERS 1821-1834.

THE LIFE OF CHARLES LAMB. By E. V. LUCAS

TWO VOLUMES. DEMY 8VO.

[*In Preparation*

Charles Lamb (aged 51)
From the painting by Henry Meyer:
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THE WORKS OF
CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

EDITED BY

E. V. LUCAS

VOLUME VI.

LETTERS

1796-1820

METHUEN & CO.
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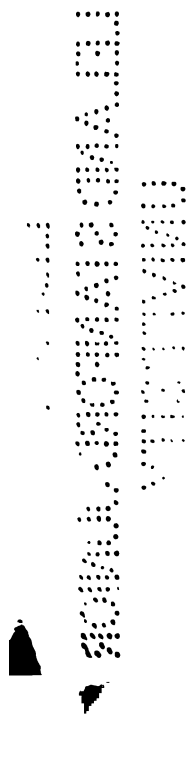

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PREFACE

IN this edition of the correspondence of Charles Lamb, that of his sister, Mary Lamb, is for the first time included. In it also appear for the first time between seventy and eighty letters, many of them of the highest importance; and it is the first edition to take note in chronological order of those letters printed by other editors that are not available for the present volumes: a step which should, I think, add to the biographical value of the work.

In these two volumes I have, after much consideration, placed my notes at the end of each letter, rather than, as in the five preceding volumes, at the end of the book. My reason for doing so was twofold: in the first place, to serve the convenience of the reader, to whom annotation of the correspondence is often a necessity, and not, as in the case of the other writings, a luxury; and in the second place, because by joining the letters with a few words of commentary they can be made practically into a consecutive Life. The self-conscious deliberate construction of Lamb's essays and poems, each a work of art, forbade the introduction of footnotes that might distract the attention from the true matter of the text: hence, in the preceding five volumes, such remarks as the editor had to make will be found sharply separated from the author's part of the book. But here, where Lamb is often writing without premeditation, with a running pen, and writing moreover for a single reader, it seemed to me that the impropriety of interrupting the correspondence by elucidatory comments was so slight as to be almost non-existent. (I say "running pen," but there is, however, I think very little doubt that Lamb also now

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and then made a rough draft of a letter first, afterwards polishing it and adding to it from time to time before he made a fair copy for his correspondent. It is unlikely, as the late Mr. Dykes Campbell has pointed out, that he could have written some of these letters off-hand as neatly and cleanly as in their existing state.) Many of my notes, I am greatly afraid, will be thought a superfluity. But having begun this edition with the determination to make it as complete and illustrative as I could, I have continued, in the Letters, to trace the sources of quotations, and to attend to other minutiæ.

Owing to the curious operations of the law of copyright, it will not for at least forty-two years be possible for any one edition of Lamb's correspondence to contain all the letters. To-day, in order to possess a set complete down to the present time, one must purchase at least nine, and possibly more, works, amounting to many volumes—among them *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*, of which I was the editor, but which I am debarred from using. It is in order, to some extent, to meet the difficulty thus set up, and to cover the whole ground of the correspondence, that I have in the notes drawn attention to every important letter distributed over these many other volumes. I am, however, perfectly aware that only for a brief period will this list be exhaustive, since new letters continually come to light, while there are, I understand, at this moment in private collections in America many letters that have not yet been printed, forty-two years' copyright in which may date from the day they are published—for the benefit not of any descendants of the Lambs (for they left none) but of those who happen to possess them.

That we have the Lamb correspondence in a very imperfect state will be patent to any one who looks at the dates in the Table of Contents to this book. It is incredible that Lamb wrote only seventy letters between the years 1807 and 1820, and only four in 1811-13. It is incredible also that he wrote altogether only three letters to Leigh Hunt, and only four to Hood. The many letters that he must have written to other friends—Martin Burney, for example—have entirely vanished. At any minute, however, others may be discovered; and there is no call for despair, especially when we recollect that the two letters of July 20, 1819, to Miss Kelly,

in some ways the most interesting of the whole correspondence, came to light only last year. That Lamb's correspondence should be incomplete is but natural: the wonder rather is that it is so full as we have it; for we are only gradually coming to understand how great a national treasure Lamb is, and how valuable is almost every sentence that he penned.

Private owners of Lamb MSS. in this country have been cheerfully willing that copies should be made; but I regret to say that my request for co-operation printed in the American literary papers met with no response. The view that the temporary owner of an original document of an author so peculiarly the world's friend as Lamb is rather a steward of the property than absolute possessor, seems as yet not to have obtained any great measure of popularity across the Atlantic. Since almost without exception the best MSS. that now come into the market are bought for America, future editions, by conscientious editors, of the correspondence of great Englishmen promise to be arduous enterprises.

By the kindness of Mr. Gordon Wordsworth I have been enabled to print for the first time a considerable number of letters from the Lambs to members of the Wordsworth family, and for the first time to give the true text of many that have been printed before. These, with the new Moxon correspondence, which Mr. Locker-Lampson has kindly allowed me to copy, constitute the finest body of new material in the present edition. But I have also obtained new copies of the many letters to Coleridge that are now in Mrs. Alfred Morrison's possession; of the letters to J. B. Dibdin, by kind permission of Mr. R. W. Dibdin; of the letters preserved at Dr. Williams' Library, several of which are now printed for the first time, by kind permission of the Trustees; of some new letters to Ayrton, by kind permission of the late W. S. Ayrton; and of several notes in the possession of Sir Charles Dilke. Other owners of originals who have kindly allowed copies to be made are Sir Edmund Elton, Mr. H. Yates-Thomson, Mr. A. M. S. Methuen, Mr. B. B. Macgeorge, Mr. Henry Poulton, Mr. R. A. Potts, Mr. R. B. Adam of Buffalo, N.Y., and the Librarian of the Gluck Library. Mr. Gordon Wordsworth has allowed me to make reduced facsimiles of letters in his possession. The reproduction of the very interesting portrait of Milton, opposite page 460, is

made by permission of the Lenox Library, New York; and of the Bellows portrait of Shakespeare by permission of Mr. B. R. Macgeorge.

The Barton letters and all other letters at the British Museum have been copied afresh, and so have those in the Dyce and Forster collection at South Kensington, at the Bodleian and National Portrait Gallery. But although great care has been taken, I am not prepared, in the face of the fatality that indissolubly associates editors of Lamb with inaccuracy, to guarantee a single line. In printing from the original documents I have sometimes altered the punctuation—but only as little as might be to assist the sense at the first reading. In great part I have left the letters as Lamb wrote them, often retaining his peculiarities of spelling and punctuation, unexpected capitals and still more unexpected small initials. I trust that no one will resent this literalness. Now and then, very reluctantly, I have had to omit a sentence or paragraph on account of a freedom beyond modern taste, while on two or three occasions a reference of a personal character has been deleted as possibly hurtful to the susceptibilities of living people. But the total amount of omissions from the letters available for the present edition does not equal one quite short missive; and a number of round epithets and passages will be discovered in it that other editors, with more courage than I can muster, have suppressed.

The letters of which I have no new transcripts are printed in the present edition, by permission of Messrs. Bell & Sons, for the most part from the text of Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, in the Bohn Library edition of the correspondence, in *Mary and Charles Lamb*, and, by arrangement with Mr. Elkin Mathews, from the same editor's text in *The Lambs* and *Lamb and Hazlitt*. Talfourd often omitted, without warning, many names and passages that Mr. Hazlitt has wisely restored: the reason for Talfourd's caution in the thirties and forties having ceased to be operative in our day. Other old letters are reprinted from the Cowden Clarkes' *Recollections of Writers*, by permission of the late Miss Mary Sabilla Novello; from *Fraser's Magazine*, by permission of Miss M. Betham Edwards; from the *Century Magazine*, by permission of Messrs. Scribner; from *William Godwin: His Friends and Ac-*

quaintances, by permission of the late Mr. Kegan Paul; from *Rogers and His Contemporaries*, by permission of the late Mr. P. W. Clayden; and one from the late Canon Ainger's edition, by permission of Messrs. Macmillan. Others come from the sources indicated in the Table of Contents.

Certain notes to Hone concerning the Garrick Plays, and one to Novello concerning the setting of George Peele's "Paris and Œnone" to music, will be found in Vol. IV. of this edition. A letter to Hone about Moxon's hoax is in Vol. V.

The frontispiece to this volume is a reproduction from a new photograph of the portrait of Lamb by Henry Meyer, painted when Lamb was fifty-one, in 1826, and now preserved at the India Office, by whose permission it is given here. The portrait which serves as frontispiece to Vol. VII. is a reproduction from the original pencil drawing made by Thomas Wageman for Barron Field about 1825. It is reproduced by permission of Mr. Halsey of New York, in whose possession it remains.

At the end of Vol. VII. will be found certain Appendices containing a few letters and passages of letters omitted from the body of the book, and now supplied from various sources, principally the collections of the late Mr. Dykes Campbell; the text of various poems referred to in the letters; and a number of notes on the earlier volumes of this edition of the Lambs' writings, together with some new material both authentic and conjectural.

E. V. L.

November 20, 1904

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THE
LETTERS OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB
1796—1820

LETTER 1

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Postmark May 27, 1796.]

DEAR C—— make yourself perfectly easy about May. I paid his bill, when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and am so still to all the purposes of a single life, so give yourself no further concern about it. The money would be superfluous to me, if I had it.

With regard to Allen,—the woman he has married has some money, I have heard about £200 a year, enough for the maintenance of herself & children, one of whom is a girl nine years old! so Allen has dipt betimes into the cares of a family. I very seldom see him, & do not know whether he has given up the Westminster hospital.

When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em,—a Guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the Work. The extracts from it in the Monthly Review and the short passages in your Watchman seem to me much superior to any thing in his partnership account with Lovell.

Your poems I shall procure forthwith. There were noble lines in what you inserted in one of your Numbers from Religious Musings, but I thought them elaborate. I am somewhat glad you have given up that Paper—it must have been dry, unprofitable, and of "dissonant mood" to your disposition. I wish you success in all your undertakings, and am glad to hear you are employed about the Evidences of Religion. There is need of multiplying such books an hundred fold in this philosophical age to *prevent* converts to Atheism, for they seem too tough disputants to meddle with afterwards. I am sincerely sorry for Allen, as a family man particularly.

Le Grice is gone to make puns in Cornwall. He has got a tutorship to a young boy, living with his Mother, a widow Lady. He will of course initiate him quickly in "whatsoever things are lovely, honorable, and of good report." He has cut Miss Hunt com-

pleatly,—the poor Girl is very ill on the Occasion, but he laughs at it, and justifies himself by saying, "she does not see him laugh." Coleridge, I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol—my life has been somewhat diversified of late. The 6 weeks that finished last year and began this your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad house at Hoxton—I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was—and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume if all told.

My Sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you.

I am beginning a poem in blank verse, which if I finish I publish.

White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from Vortigern) Original letters of Falstaff, Shallow &c—, a copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw.

Coleridge, it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another Person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy.

The sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid Intervals.

TO MY SISTER

If from my lips some angry accents fell,
  Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
'Twas but the error of a sickly mind,
And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well,
  And waters clear, of Reason; and for me,
  Let this my verse the poor atonement be,
My verse, which thou to praise wast ever inclined
  Too highly, and with a partial eye to see
No blemish: thou to me didst ever shew
  Fondest affection, and woud'st oftimes lend
An ear to the desponding love sick lay,
  Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay
But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
  Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

With these lines, and with that sister's kindest remembrances to C——, I conclude—

Yours sincerely LAMB.

Your Conciones ad populum are the most eloquent politics that ever came in my way.

Write, when convenient—not as a task, for there is nothing in this letter to answer.

You may inclose under cover to me at the India house what letters you please, for they come post free.

We cannot send our remembrances to Mrs. C—— not having seen her, but believe me our best good wishes attend you both.

My civic and poetic compts to Southey if at Bristol.—Why, he is a very Leviathan of Bards—the small minnow I—

NOTE

[This is the earliest letter of Lamb's that has come down to us. On February 10, 1796, he was just twenty-one years old, and was now living at 7 Little Queen Street (since demolished) with his father, mother, Aunt Sarah Lamb (known as Aunt Hetty), Mary Lamb and, possibly, John Lamb. John Lamb, senior, was doing nothing and had, I think, already begun to break up: his old master, Samuel Salt, had died in February, 1792. John Lamb, the son (born June 5, 1763), had a clerkship at the South-Sea House; Charles Lamb had begun his long period of service in the India House; and Mary Lamb (born December 3, 1764) was occupied as a mantua-maker.

At this time Coleridge was twenty-three; he would be twenty-four on October 21. His military experiences over, he had married Sara Fricker on October 4, 1795 (a month before Southey married her sister Edith), and was living at Bristol, on Redcliffe Hill. The first number of *The Watchman* was dated on March 1, 1796; on May 13, 1796, it came to an end. On April 16, 1796, Cottle had issued Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects*, containing also four "effusions" by Charles Lamb (Nos. VII., XI., XII. and XIII.), and the "Religious Musings." Southey, on bad terms with Coleridge, partly on account of Southey's abandonment of Pantisocracy, was in Lisbon. His *Joan of Arc* had just been published by Cottle in quarto at a guinea. Previously he had collaborated in *The Fall of Robespierre*, 1794, with Coleridge and Robert Lovell. Each, one evening, had set forth to write an act by the next. Southey and Lovell did so, but Coleridge brought only a part of his. Lovell's being useless, Southey rewrote his act, Coleridge finished his at leisure, and the result was published. Robert Lovell (1770?-1796) had also been associated with Coleridge and Southey in Pantisocracy and was their brother-in-law, having married Mary Fricker, another of the sisters. When, in 1795, Southey and Lovell had published a joint volume of *Poems*, Southey took the pseudonym of Bion and Lovell of Moschus.

May was probably the landlord of the Salutation and Cat. The London Directory for 1808 has "William May, Salutation Coffee House, 17 Newgate Street." We must suppose that when

Coleridge quitted the Salutation and Cat in January, 1795, he was unable to pay his bill, and therefore had to leave his luggage behind. Cottle's story of Coleridge being offered free lodging by a London inn-keeper, if he would only talk and talk, must then either be a pretty invention or apply to another landlord, possibly the host of the Angel in Butcher Hall Street.

Allen was Robert Allen, a schoolfellow of Lamb and Coleridge, and Coleridge's first friend. He was born on October 18, 1772. Both Lamb and Leigh Hunt tell good stories of him at Christ's Hospital, Lamb in *Elia* and Hunt in his *Autobiography*. From Christ's Hospital he went to University College, Oxford, and it was he who introduced Coleridge and Hucks to Southey in 1794. Probably, says Mr. E. H. Coleridge, it was he who brought Coleridge and Stoddart (afterwards Sir John and Hazlitt's brother-in-law) together. On leaving Oxford he seems to have gone to Westminster to learn surgery, and in 1797 he was appointed Deputy-Surgeon to the 2nd Royals, then in Portugal. He married a widow with children; at some time later took to journalism, as Lamb's reference in the *Elia* essay on "Newspapers" tells us; and he died of apoplexy in 1805.

The phrase "dissonant mood" (*Samson Agonistes*, line 662) had been used by Coleridge in line 6 of his Effusion 22, "To a Friend with an Unfinished Poem," the friend being Lamb.

Coleridge's employment on the *Evidences of Religion*, whatever it may have been, did not reach print.

Le Grice was Charles Valentine Le Grice (1773-1858), an old Christ's Hospitaller and Grecian (see Lamb's *Elia* essays on "Christ's Hospital" and "Grace before Meat"). Le Grice passed to Trinity College, Cambridge. He left in 1796 and became tutor to William John Godolphin Nicholls of Trereife, near Penzance, the only son of a widowed mother. Le Grice was ordained in 1798 and married Mrs. Nicholls in 1799. Young Nicholls died in 1815 and Mrs. Le Grice in 1821, when Le Grice became sole owner of the Trereife property. He was incumbent of St. Mary's, Penzance, for some years. Le Grice was a witty, rebellious character, but he never fulfilled the promise of his early days. It has been conjectured that his skill in punning awakened Lamb's ambition in that direction. Le Grice saw Lamb next in 1834, at the Bell at Edmonton. His recollections of Lamb were included by Talfourd in the *Memorials*, and his recollections of Coleridge were printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, December, 1834. I know nothing of Miss Hunt.

"Whatsoever things are honest . . ." See Philippians iv. 8.

Of Lamb's confinement in a madhouse we know no more than is here told. It is conjectured that the "other person" to whom

Lamb refers a few lines later was Ann Simmons, a girl at Widford for whom he had an attachment that had been discouraged, if not forbidden, by her friends. This is the only attack of the kind that Lamb is known to have suffered. He once told Coleridge that during his illness he had sometimes believed himself to be Young Norval in Home's "Douglas."

The poem in blank verse was, we learn in a subsequent letter, "The Grandame," or possibly an autobiographical work of which "The Grandame" is the only portion that survived.

White was James White (1775-1820), an old Christ's Hospitaller and a friend and almost exact contemporary of Lamb. Lamb, who first kindled his enthusiasm for Shakespeare, was, I think, to some extent involved in the *Original Letters, &c., of Sir John Falstaff and his Friends*, which appeared in 1796. The dedication—to Master Samuel Irelaunde, meaning William Henry Ireland (who sometimes took his father's name Samuel), the forger of the pretended Shakespearian play "Vortigern," produced at Drury Lane earlier in the year—is quite in Lamb's manner (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 465). White's immortality, however, rests not upon this book, but upon his portrait in the *Elia* essay on "Chimney-Sweepers."

The sonnet "To my Sister" was printed, with slight alterations, by Lamb in Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition, 1797, and again in Lamb's *Works*, 1818.

Coleridge's *Conciones ad Populum; or, Addresses to the People*, had been published at Bristol in November, 1795.

Close students of Lamb's Letters will observe that this, together with many of the early letters to Coleridge which follow, differs from the text of the other editions, new copies having been made from the originals in the Morrison Collection.]

LETTER 2

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably begun either on Tuesday, May 24, or Tuesday, May 31, 1796. Postmark? June 1.]

I AM in such violent pain with the head ach that I am fit for nothing but transcribing, scarce for that. When I get your poems, and the Joan of Arc, I will exercise my presumption in giving you my opinion of 'em. The mail does not come in before tomorrow (Wednesday) morning. The following sonnet was composed during a walk down into Hertfordshire early in last Summer.

The lord of light shakes off his drowsyhed.*
  Fresh from his couch up springs the lusty Sun,
  And girds himself his mighty race to run.
Meantime, by truant love of rambling led,
I turn my back on thy detested walls,
  Proud City, and thy sons I leave behind,
  A selfish, sordid, money-getting kind,
Who shut their ears when holy Freedom calls.
I pass not thee so lightly, humble spire,
  That mindest me of many a pleasure gone,
  Of merriest days, of love and Islington,
Kindling anew the flames of past desire;
  And I shall muse on thee, slow journeying on,
To the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

* Drowsyhed I have met with I think in Spencer. Tis an old thing, but it rhymes with led & rhyming covers a multitude of licences.

The last line is a copy of Bowles's, "to the green hamlet in the peaceful plain." Your ears are not so very fastidious—many people would not like words so prosaic and familiar in a sonnet as Islington and Hertfordshire. The next was written within a day or two of the last, on revisiting a spot where the scene was laid of my 1st sonnet that "mock'd my step with many a lonely glade."

When last I roved these winding wood-walks green,
  Green winding walks, and pathways shady-sweet,
Oftimes would Anna seek the silent scene,
  Shrouding her beauties in the lone retreat.
No more I hear her footsteps in the shade;
  Her image only in these pleasant ways
  Meets me self-wandring where in better days
I held free converse with my fair-hair'd maid.
I pass'd the little cottage, which she loved,
  The cottage which did once my all contain:
  It spake of days that ne'er must come again,
Spake to my heart and much my heart was moved.
  "Now fair befall thee, gentle maid," said I,
  And from the cottage turn'd me, with a sigh.

The next retains a few lines from a sonnet of mine, which you once remarked had no "body of thought" in it. I agree with you, but have preserved a part of it, and it runs thus. I flatter myself you will like it.

A timid grace sits trembling in her Eye,
  As loth to meet the rudeness of men's sight,
  Yet shedding a delicious lunar light,
That steeps in kind oblivious extacy
The care-craz'd mind, like some still melody;
  Speaking most plain the thoughts which do possess
  Her gentle sprite, peace and meek quietness,
And innocent loves,* and maiden purity.
A look whereof might heal the cruel smart
  Of changed friends, or fortune's wrongs unkind;
Might to sweet deeds of mercy move the heart
  Of him, who hates his brethren of mankind.
Turned are those beams from me, who fondly yet
Past joys, vain loves, and buried hopes regret.

* Cowley uses this phrase with a somewhat different meaning: I meant loves of relatives friends &c.

The next and last I value most of all. 'Twas composed close upon the heels of the last in that very wood I had in mind when I wrote "Methinks how dainty sweet."

We were two pretty babes, the youngest she,
The youngest and the loveliest far, I ween,
And INNOCENCE her name. The time has been,
We two did love each other's company;
Time was, we two had wept to have been apart.
But when, with shew of seeming good beguil'd,
I left the garb and manners of a child,
And my first love for man's society,
Defiling with the world my virgin heart,
My loved companion dropt a tear, and fled,
And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
Beloved, who can tell me where Thou art,
In what delicious Eden to be found,
That I may seek thee the wide world around.

Since writing it, I have found in a poem by Hamilton of Bangour, these 2 lines to happiness

Nun sober and devout, where art thou fled
To hide in shades thy meek contented head.

Lines eminently beautiful, but I do not remember having re'd 'em previously, for the credit of my 10th and 11th lines. Parnell has 2 lines (which probably suggested the *above*) to Contentment

Whither ah! whither art thou fled,
To hide thy meek contented head.*

* an odd epithet for contentment in a poet so poetical as Parnell.

Cowley's exquisite Elegy on the death of his friend Harvey suggested the phrase of "we two"

"Was there a tree that did not know
The love betwixt us two?———"

So much for acknowledged plagiarisms, the confession of which I know not whether it has more of vanity or modesty in it. As to my blank verse I am so dismally slow and steril of ideas (I speak from my heart) that I much question if it will ever come to any issue. I have hitherto only hammered out a few indepen[den]t unconnected snatches, not in a capacity to be sent. I am very ill, and will rest till I have read your poems—for which I am very thankful. I have one more favour to beg of you, that you never mention Mr. May's affair in any sort, much less *think* of repaying. Are we not flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-em-ists?

We have just learnd, that my poor brother has had a sad accident: a large stone blown down by yesterday's high wind has bruised his leg in a most shocking manner—he is under the care of Cruikshanks. Coleridge, there are 10,000 objections against my paying

you a visit at Bristol—it cannot be, else—but in this world 'tis better not to think too much of pleasant possibles, that we may not be out of humour with present insipids. Should any thing bring you to London, you will recollect No. 7, Little Queen St. Holborn.

I shall be too ill to call on Wordsworth myself but will take care to transmit him his poem, when I have read it. I saw Le Grice the day before his departure, and mentioned incidentally his "teaching the young idea how to shoot"—knowing him and the probability there is of people having a propensity to pun in his company you will not wonder that we both stumbled on the same pun at once, he eagerly anticipating me,—"he would teach him to shoot!"—Poor Le Grice! if wit alone could entitle a man to respect, &c. He has written a very witty little pamphlet lately, satirical upon college declamations; when I send White's book, I will add that.

I am sorry there should be any difference between you and Southey. "Between you two there should be peace," tho' I must say I have borne him no good will since he spirited you away from among us. What is become of Moschus? You sported some of his sublimities, I see, in your Watchman. Very decent things. So much for to night from your afflicted headachey sorethroatey, humble Servant C. Lamb——Tuesday night———.

Of your Watchmen, the Review of Burke was the best prose. I augurd great things from the 1st number. There is some exquisite poetry interspersed. I have re-read the extract from the Religious musings and retract whatever invidious there was in my censure of it as elaborate. There are times when one is not in a disposition thoroughly to relish good writing. I have re-read it in a more favourable moment and hesitate not to pronounce it sublime. If there be any thing in it approach[e] to tumidity (which I meant not to infer in elaborate: I meant simply labord) it is the Gigantic hyperbole by which you describe the Evils of existing society. Snakes, Lions, hyenas and behemoths, is carrying your resentment beyond bounds. The pictures of the Simoom, of frenzy and ruin, of the whore of Babylon and the cry of the foul spirits disherited of Earth and the strange beatitude which the good man shall recognise in heaven—as well as the particularizing of the children of wretchedness—(I have unconsciously included every part of it) form a variety of uniform excellence. I hunger and thirst to read the poem complete. That is a capital line in your 6th no.: "this dark freeze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering Month"—they are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughd up daisy you seem to have had in

mind. Your complaint that [of] your readers some thought there was too much, some too little, original matter in your Nos., reminds me of poor dead Parsons in the Critic—"too little incident! Give me leave to tell you, Sir, there is too much incident." I had like to have forgot thanking you for that exquisite little morsel the 1st Sclavonian Song. The expression in the 2d "more happy to be unhappy in hell"—is it not very quaint? Accept my thanks in common with those of all who love good poetry for the Braes of Yarrow. I congratulate you on the enemies you must have made by your splendid invective against the barterers in "human flesh and sinews." Coleridge, you will rejoice to hear that Cowper is recovered from his lunacy, and is employ'd on his translation of the Italian &c. poems of Milton, for an edition where Fuseli presides as designer. Coleridge, to an idler like myself to write and receive letters are both very pleasant, but I wish not to break in upon your valuable time by expecting to hear very frequently from you. Reserve that obligation for your moments of lassitude, when you have nothing else to do; for your loco-restive and all your idle propensities of course have given way to the duties of providing for a family. The mail is come in but no parcel, yet this is Tuesday. Farewell then till to morrow, for a nich and a nook I must leave for criticisms. By the way I hope you do not send your own only copy of Joan of Arc; I will in that case return it immediately.

Your parcel *is* come, you have been *lavish* of your presents. Wordsworth's poem I have hurried thro not without delight. Poor Lovell! my heart almost accuses me for the light manner I spoke of him above, not dreaming of his death. My heart bleeds for your accumulated troubles, God send you thro' 'em with patience. I conjure you dream not that I will ever think of being repaid! the very word is galling to the ears. I have read all your Rel: Musings with uninterrupted feelings of profound admiration. You may safely rest your fame on it. The best remain[s] things are what I have before read, and they lose nothing by my recollection of your manner of reciting 'em, for I too bear in mind "the voice, the look" of absent friends, and can occasionally mimic their manner for the amusement of those who have seen 'em. Your impassioned manner of recitation I can recall at any time to mine own heart, and to the ears of the bystanders. I rather wish you had left the monody on C. concluding as it did abruptly. It had more of unity.—The conclusion of your R Musings I fear will entitle you to the reproof of your Beloved woman, who wisely will not suffer your fancy to run riot, but bids you walk humbly with your God. The very last words "I exercise my young noviciate tho[t] in mini-steries of heart-stirring song," tho' not now new to me, cannot be enough

admired. To speak politely, they are a well turnd compliment to Poetry. I hasten to read Joan of Arc, &c. I have read your lines at the begins of 2d book, they are worthy of Milton, but in my mind yield to your Rel Musᵉˢ. I shall read the whole carefully and in some future letter take the liberty to particularize my opinions of it. Of what is new to me among your poems next to the Musings, that beginning "My Pensive Sara" gave me most pleasure: the lines in it I just alluded to are most exquisite—they made my sister and self smile, as conveying a pleasing picture of Mrs. C. chequing your wild wandrings, which we were so fond of hearing you indulge when among us. It has endeared us more than any thing to your good Lady; and your own self-reproof that follows delighted us. 'Tis a charming poem throughout. (You have well remarked that "charming, admirable, exquisite" are words expressive of feelings, more than conveying of ideas, else I might plead very well want of room in my paper as excuse for generalizing.) I want room to tell you how we are charmed with your verses in the manner of Spencer, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. I am glad you resume the Watchman—change the name, leave out all articles of News, and whatever things are peculiar to News Papers, and confine yourself to Ethics, verse, criticism, or, rather do not confine yourself. Let your plan be as diffuse as the Spectator, and I'll answer for it the work prospers. If I am vain enough to think I can be a contributor, rely on my inclinations. Coleridge, in reading your Rs Musings I felt a transient superiority over you: I *have* seen Priestly. I love to see his name repeated in your writings. I love and honor him almost profanely. You would be charmed with his *sermons*, if you never read 'em.—You have doubtless read his books, illustrative of the doctrine of Necessity. Prefixed to a late work of his, in answer to Paine, there is a preface, given [? giving] an account of the Man and his services to Men, written by Lindsey, his dearest friend,—well worth your reading.

Tuesday Eve.—Forgive my prolixity, which is yet too brief for all I could wish to say.—God give you comfort and all that are of your household.—Our loves and best good wishes to Mrs. C.

C. Lamb.

Note

[The postmark of this letter looks like June 1, but it might be June 7. It was odd to date it "Tuesday night" half way through, and "Tuesday eve" at the end. Possibly Lamb began it on Tuesday, May 24, and finished it on Tuesday, May 31; possibly he began it on Tuesday, May 31, and finished it and posted it on Tuesday, June 7.

The Hertfordshire sonnet was printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for December, 1797, and not reprinted by Lamb. The last line, which he says here is from Bowles (the last line of the sonnet "To a Friend"), has a nearer counterpart in William Vallan's *Tale of Two Swans* (1590), quoted in *Leland's Itinerary*, Hearne's edition :—

> About this time the Lady Venus views
> The fruitful fields of pleasant Hertfordshire.

This interesting discovery was made by Mr. W. J. Craig.

The sonnet that "mock'd my step with many a lonely glade" is that beginning—

> Was it some sweet device of Faëry,

which had been printed in Coleridge's *Poems*, 1796. The second, third and fourth of the sonnets that are copied in this letter were printed in the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797. Anna is generally supposed to be Ann Simmons, referred to in the previous note.

The lines from Hamilton of Bangor are in his "Epistle to the Countess of Eglintoun (with 'The Gentle Shepherd')": "where" should be "why." Parnell's lines are in his "Hymn to Contentment": "ah" should be "O" and "hide" "lay." In Cowley's poem the first of the quoted lines runs :—

> Was there a tree about which did not know
> The love, &c.

Concerning "Flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-'em-ists," Canon Ainger has the following interesting note: "'Flocci, nauci' is the beginning of a rule in the old Latin grammars, containing a list of words signifying 'of no account,' *floccus* being a lock of wool, and *naucus* a trifle. Lamb was recalling a sentence in one of Shenstone's Letters :—'I loved him for nothing so much as his flocci-nauci-nihili-pili-fication of money.'" But "Pantisocratists" was, of course, the word that Lamb was shadowing. Pantisocracy, however—the new order of common living and high thinking, to be established on the banks of the Susquehanna by Coleridge, Southey, Favell, Burnett and others—was already dead.

William Cumberland Cruikshank, the anatomist, who attended Lamb's brother, had a great reputation. He had attended Dr. Johnson in his last illness.

Le Grice's pamphlet was *A General Theorem for A******* Coll. Declamation*, by Gronovius, 1796.—The phrase "teaching the young idea how to shoot" is from Thomson's *Seasons*.

Southey and Coleridge had been on somewhat strained terms for some time ; possibly, as I have said in the previous note, owing to

Southey's abandonment of Pantisocratic fervour, which anticipated Coleridge's by some months. Also, to marry sisters does not always lead to serenity. The spiriting away of Coleridge had been effected by Southey in January, 1795, when he found Coleridge at the Angel in Butcher Hall Street (*vice* the Salutation in Newgate Street) and bore him back to Bristol and the forlorn Sara Fricker, and away from Lamb, journalism and egg-hot.

"Between you two there should be peace"—

> Between us two let there be peace.
> *Paradise Lost*, X., 924.

Moschus was, as we have seen, Robert Lovell. No. V. of *The Watchman* contained sonnets by him.

The review of Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord* was in No. I. of *The Watchman*.—The passage from "Religious Musings," under the title "The Present State of Society," was in No. II.—extending from line 260 to 357.[1]—The capital line in No. VI. is in the poem, "Lines on Observing a Blossom on the First of February, 1796."—Poor dead Parsons would be William Parsons (1736-1795), the original Sir Fretful Plagiary in Sheridan's "Critic." Lamb praises him in his essay on the Artificial Comedy.—In No. IX. of *The Watchman* were prose paraphrases of three Sclavonian songs, the first being "Song of a Female Orphan," and the second, "Song of the Haymakers."—John Logan's "Braes of Yarrow" had been quoted in No. III. as "the most exquisite performance in our language."—The invective against "the barterers" refers to the denunciation of the slave trade in No. IV. of *The Watchman*.

Cowper's recovery was only partial; and he was never rightly himself after 1793. The edition of Milton had been begun about 1790. It was never finished as originally intended; but Fuseli completed forty pictures, which were exhibited in 1799. An edition of Cowper's translations, with designs by Flaxman, was published in 1808, and of Cowper's complete Milton in 1810.

Wordsworth's poem would be "Guilt and Sorrow," of which a portion was printed in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, and the whole published in 1842.

"The voice, the look." Possibly a phrase in Coleridge's letter, to which Lamb is replying. In one of Lloyd's sonnets in Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797 (page 205), are the words "That look, those accents."

Coleridge's "Monody on Chatterton," the first poem in his *Poems on Various Subjects*, 1796, had been written originally at Christ's Hospital, 1790: it continued to be much altered before the final version.

The two lines from "Religious Musings" are not the last, but the beginning of the last passage.

[1] These lines were 279-378 1st ed.; 264-363 2nd ed.

Coleridge contributed between three and four hundred lines to Book II. of Southey's *Joan of Arc*, as we shall see later. The poem beginning "My Pensive Sara" was Effusion 35, afterwards called "The Æolian Harp," and the lines to which Lamb refers are these, following upon Coleridge's description of how flitting phantasies traverse his indolent and passive brain:—

> But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
> Darts, O beloved Woman! nor such thoughts
> Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,
> And biddest me walk humbly with my God.

The plan to resume *The Watchman* did not come to anything.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), the theologian, at this time the object of Lamb's adoration, was one of the fathers of Unitarianism, a creed in which Lamb had been brought up under the influence of his Aunt Hetty. Coleridge, as a supporter of one of Priestley's allies, William Frend of Cambridge, and as a convinced Unitarian, was also an admirer of Priestley, concerning whom and the Birmingham riots of 1791 is a fine passage in "Religious Musings," while one of the sonnets of the 1796 volume was addressed to him: circumstances which Lamb had in mind when mentioning him in this letter. Lamb had probably seen Priestley at the Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, where he became morning preacher in December, 1791, remaining there until March, 1794. Thenceforward he lived in America. His *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion* appeared between 1772 and 1774. The other work referred to is *Letters to the Philosophers and Politicians of France*, newly edited by Theophilus Lindsey, the Unitarian, as *An Answer to Mr. Paine's "Age of Reason,"* 1795.]

LETTER 8

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Begun Wednesday, June 8. Dated on address: "Friday 10th June," 1796.]

WITH Joan of Arc I have been delighted, amazed. I had not presumed to expect any thing of such excellence from Southey. Why the poem is alone sufficient to redeem the character of the age we live in from the imputation of degenerating in Poetry, were there no such beings extant as Burns and Bowles, Cowper and ——fill up the blank how you please, I say nothing. The subject is well chosen. It opens well. To become more particular, I will notice in their order a few passages that chiefly struck me on perusal. Page 26 "Fierce and terrible Benevolence!" is a phrase full of grandeur

and originality. The whole context made me feel *possess'd*, even like Joan herself. Page 28, "it is most horrible with the keen sword to gore the finely fibred human frame" and what follows pleased me mightily. In the 2d Book the first forty lines, in particular, are majestic and high-sounding. Indeed the whole vision of the palace of Ambition and what follows are supremely excellent. Your simile of the Laplander "by Niemi's lake Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone Of Solfar Kapper"—will bear comparison with any in Milton for fullness of circumstance and lofty-pacedness of Versification. Southey's similes, tho' many of 'em are capital, are all inferior. In one of his books the simile of the Oak in the Storm occurs I think four times! To return, the light in which you view the heathen deities is accurate and beautiful. Southey's personifications in this book are so many fine and faultless pictures. I was much pleased with your manner of accounting for the reason why Monarchs take delight in War. At the 447th line you have placed Prophets and Enthusiasts cheek by jowl, on too intimate a footing for the dignity of the former. Necessarian-like-speaking it is corect. Page 98 "Dead is the Douglas, cold thy warrior frame, illustrious Buchan" &c are of kindred excellence with Gray's "Cold is Cadwallo's tongue" &c. How famously the Maid baffles the Doctors, Seraphic and Irrefragable, "with all their trumpery!" 126 page, the procession, the appearances of the Maid, of the Bastard son of Orleans and of Tremouille, are full of fire and fancy, and exquisite melody of versification. The personifications from line 303 to 309 in the heat of the battle had better been omitted, they are not very striking and only encumber. The converse which Joan and Conrade hold on the Banks of the Loire is altogether beautiful. Page 313, the conjecture that in Dreams "all things are that seem" is one of those conceits which the Poet delights to admit into his creed—a creed, by the way, more marvellous and mystic than ever Athanasius dream'd of. Page 315, I need only *mention* those lines ending with "She saw a serpent gnawing at her heart"!!! They are good imitative lines "he toild and toild, of toil to reap no end, but endless toil and never ending woe." 347 page, Cruelty is such as Hogarth might have painted her. Page 361, all the passage about Love (where he seems to confound conjugal love with Creating and Preserving love) is very confused and sickens me with a load of useless personifications. Else that 9th Book is the finest in the volume, an exquisite combination of the ludicrous and the terrible, —I have never read either, even in translation, but such as I conceive to be the manner of Dante and Ariosto. The 10th book is the most languid. On the whole, considering the celerity wherewith the poem was finish'd, I was astonish'd at the infrequency of weak lines. I had expected to find it verbose. Joan, I think, does too

little in Battle—Dunois, perhaps, the same—Conrade too much. The anecdotes interspersed among the battles refresh the mind very agreeably, and I am delighted with the very many passages of simple pathos abounding throughout the poem—passages which the author of "Crasy Kate" might have written. Has not Master Southey spoke very slightingly in his preface and disparagingly of Cowper's Homer?—what makes him reluctant to give Cowper his fame? And does not Southey use too often the expletives "did" and "does?" they have a good effect at times, but are too inconsiderable, or rather become blemishes, when they mark a style. On the whole, I expect Southey one day to rival Milton. I already deem him equal to Cowper, and superior to all living Poets Besides. What says Coleridge? The "Monody on Henderson" is *immensely good;* the rest of that little volume is *readable and above mediocrity.* I proceed to a more pleasant task,—pleasant because the poems are yours, pleasant because you impose the task on me, and pleasant, let me add, because it will confer a whimsical importance on me to sit in judgment upon your rhimes. First tho', let me thank you again and again in my own and my sister's name for your invitations. Nothing could give us more pleasure than to come, but (were there no other reasons) while my Brother's leg is so bad it is out of the question. Poor fellow, he is very feverish and light headed, but Cruikshanks has pronounced the symptoms favorable, and gives us every hope that there will be no need of amputation. God send, not. We are necessarily confined with him the afternoon and evening till very late, so that I am stealing a few minutes to write to you. Thank you for your frequent letters, you are the only correspondent and I might add the only friend I have in the world. I go no where and have no acquaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society and I am left alone. Allen calls only occasionally, as tho' it were a duty rather, and seldom stays ten minutes. Then judge how thankful I am for your letters. Do not, however, burthen yourself with the correspondence. I trouble you again so soon, only in obedience to your injunctions. Complaints apart, proceed we to our task. I am called away to tea, thence must wait upon my brother, so must delay till to-morrow. Farewell—Wednesday.

Thursday. I will first notice what is new to me. 13th page. "The thrilling tones that concentrate the soul" is a nervous line, and the 6 first lines of page 14 are very pretty. The 21st effusion a perfect thing. That in the manner of Spencer is very sweet, particularly at the close. The 35th effusion is most exquisite—that line in particular, "And tranquil muse upon tranquillity."

It is the very reflex pleasure that distinguishes the tranquillity of a thinking being from that of a shepherd—a modern one I would be understood to mean—a Dametas; one that keeps other people's sheep. Certainly, Coleridge, your letter from Shurton Bars has less merit than most things in your volume; personally, it may chime in best with your own feelings, and therefore you love it best. It has however great merit. In your 4th Epistle that is an exquisite paragraph and fancy-full of "A stream there is which rolls in lazy flow" &c. &c. "Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmine bowers" is a sweet line and so are the 3 next. The concluding simile is far-fetch'd. "Tempest-honord" is a quaint-ish phrase. Of the Monody on H., I will here only notice these lines, as superlatively excellent. That energetic one, "Shall I not praise thee, Scholar, Christian, friend," like to that beautiful climax of Shakspeare "King, Hamlet, Royal Dane, Father." "Yet memory turns from little men to thee!" "and sported careless round their fellow child." The whole, I repeat it, is immensely good. Yours is a Poetical family. I was much surpriz'd and pleased to see the signature of Sara to that elegant composition, the 5th Epistle. I dare not *criticise* the Relig Musings, I like not to *select* any part where all is excellent. I can only admire; and thank you for it in the name of a Christian as well as a Lover of good Poetry. Only let me ask, is not that thought and those words in Young, "Stands in the Sun"? or is it only such as Young in one of his *better moments* might have writ? "Believe, thou, O my Soul, Life is a vision, shadowy of truth, And vice and anguish and the wormy grave, Shapes of a dream!" I thank you for these lines, in the name of a Necessarian, and for what follows in next paragraph in the name of a child of fancy. After all you can[not] nor ever will write any thing, with which I shall be so delighted as what I have heard yourself repeat. You came to Town, and I saw you at a time when your heart was yet bleeding with recent wounds. Like yourself, I was sore galled with disappointed Hope. You had "many an holy lay, that mourning, soothed the mourner on his way." I had ears of sympathy to drink them in, and they yet vibrate pleasant on the sense. When I read in your little volume, your 19th Effusion, or the 28th or 29th, or what you call the "Sigh," I think I hear *you* again. I image to myself the little smoky room at the Salutation and Cat, where we have sat together thro' the winter nights, beguiling the cares of life with Poesy. When you left London, I felt a dismal void in my heart, I found myself cut off at one and the same time from two most dear to me. "How blest with Ye the Path could I have trod of Quiet life." In your conversation you had blended so many pleasant fancies, that they cheated me of my grief. But in your absence, the tide of melancholy rushd in again, and did its

worst Mischief by overwhelming my Reason. I have recoverd. But feel a stupor that makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to introduce a religious turn of mind, but habits are strong things, and my religious fervors are confined alas to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion—A correspondence, opening with you, has roused me a little from my lethargy, and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it. I will not be very troublesome. At some future time I will amuse you with an account as full as my memory will permit of the strange turn my phrensy took. I look back upon it at times with a gloomy kind of Envy. For while it lasted I had many many hours of pure happiness. Dream not Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of Fancy, till you have gone mad. All now seems to me vapid; comparatively so. Excuse this selfish digression.

Your monody is so superlatively excellent, that I can only wish it perfect, which I can't help feeling it is not quite. Indulge me in a few conjectures. What I am going to propose would make it more compress'd and I think more energic, tho' I am sensible at the expence of many beautiful lines. Let it begin "Is this the land of song-ennobled line," and proceed to "Otway's famish'd form." Then "Thee Chatterton," to "blaze of Seraphim." Then "clad in nature's rich array," to "orient day;" then "but soon the scathing lightning," to "blighted land." Then "Sublime of thought" to "his bosom glows." Then "but soon upon *his* poor unshelterd head Did Penury her sickly Mildew shed, and soon are fled the charms of vernal Grace, and Joy's wild gleams that lightend o'er his face!" Then "Youth of tumultuous soul" to "sigh" as before. The rest may all stand down to "gaze upon the waves below." What follows now may come next, as detached verses, suggested by the Monody, rather than a part of it. They are indeed in themselves very sweet "And we at sober eve would round thee throng, Hanging enraptured on thy stately song"—in particular perhaps. If I am obscure you may understand me by counting lines. I have proposed omitting 24 lines. I feel that thus comprest it would gain energy, but think it most likely you will not agree with me, for who shall go about to bring opinions to the Bed of Procrustes and introduce among the Sons of Men a monotony of identical feelings. I only propose with diffidence. Reject, you, if you please, with as little remorse as you would the color of a coat or the pattern of a buckle where our fancies differ'd. The lines "Friend to the friendless" &c. which you may think "rudely disbranched" from the Chatterton will patch in with the Man of Ross, where they were once quite at Home, with 2 more which I recollect "and o'er the dowried virgin's snowy cheek bad bridal love

suffuse his blushes meek!" very beautiful. The Pixies is a perfect thing, and so are the lines on the spring, page 28. The Epitaph on an Infant, like a Jack of lanthorn, has danced about (or like Dr. Forster's scholars) out of the Morn Chron into the Watchman, and thence back into your Collection. It is very pretty, and you seem to think so, but, may be o'er looked its chief merit, that of filling up a whole page. I had once deemd Sonnets of unrivalled use that way, but your epitaphs, I find, are the more diffuse. Edmund still holds its place among your best verses. "Ah! fair delights" to "roses round" in your Poem called Absence recall (none more forcibly) to my mind the tones in which *you recited it.* I will not notice in this tedious (to you) manner verses which have been so long delightful to me, and which you already know my opinion of. Of this kind are Bowles, Priestly, and that most exquisite and most Bowles-like of all, the 19th Effusion. It would have better ended with "agony of care." The last 2 lines are obvious and unnecessary and you need not now make 14 lines of it, now it is rechristend from a Sonnet to an Effusion. Schiller might have written the 20 Effusion. 'Tis worthy of him in any sense. I was glad to meet with those lines you sent me, when my Sister was so ill. I had lost the Copy, and I felt not a little proud at seeing my name in your verse. The complaint of Ninathoma (1st stanza in particular) is the best, or only good imitation, of Ossian I ever saw—your restless gale excepted. "To an infant" is most sweet—is not "foodful," tho', very harsh! would not "dulcet" fruit be less harsh, or some other friendly bi-syllable? In Edmund, "Frenzy fierce-eyed child," is not so well as frantic—tho' that is an epithet adding nothing to the meaning. Slander *couching* was better than squatting. In the Man of Ross it *was* a better line thus "If 'neath this roof thy wine-chear'd moments pass" than as it stands now. Time nor nothing can reconcile me to the concluding 5 lines of Kosciusko: call it any thing you will but sublime. In my 12th Effusion I had rather have seen what I wrote myself, tho' they bear no comparison with your exquisite lines "On rose-leaf'd beds amid your faery bowers," &c.—I love my sonnets because they are the reflected images of my own feelings at different times. To instance, in the 13th "How reason reel'd," &c.—are good lines but must spoil the whole with ME who know it is only a fiction of yours and that the rude dashings did in fact NOT ROCK me to REPOSE. I grant the same objection applies not to the former sonnet, but still I love my own feelings. They are dear to memory, tho' they now and then wake a sigh or a tear. "Thinking on divers things foredone," I charge you, Col., spare my ewe lambs, and tho' a Gentleman may borrow six lines in an epic poem (I should have no objection to borrow 500 and without acknowledging) still in a Sonnet—a per-

sonal poem—I do not "ask my friend the aiding verse." I would not wrong your feelings by proposing any improvements (did I think myself capable of suggesting 'em) in such personal poems as "Thou bleedest my poor heart"—'od so, I am catchd, I have already done it—but that simile I propose abridging would not change the feeling or introduce any alien ones. Do you understand me? In the 28th however, and in the "Sigh" and that composed at Clevedon, things that come from the heart direct, not by the medium of the fancy, I would not suggest an alteration. When my blank verse is finished, or any long fancy poems, "*propino tibi alterandum, cut-up-andum, abridg-andum,*" just what you will with it—but spare my EWE LAMBS! That to Mrs. Siddons now you were welcome to improve, if it had been worth it. But I say unto you again, Col., spare my EWE LAMBS. I must confess were they mine I should omit, in Editione secundâ, Effusions 2-3, because satiric, and below the dignity of the poet of Religious Musings, 5-7, half of the 8th, that written in early Youth, as far as "Thousand eyes,"—tho' I part not unreluctantly with that lively line "Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright-blue eyes" and one or 2 more just thereabouts. But I would substitute for it that sweet poem called "Recollection" in the 5th No. of the Watchman, better I think than the remainder of this poem, tho' not differing materially. As the poem now stands it looks altogether confused. And do not omit those lines upon the "early blossom," in your 6th No. of the Watchman, and I would omit the 10th Effusion—or what would do better, alter and improve the last 4 lines. In fact, I suppose if they were mine I should *not* omit 'em. But your verse is for the most part so exquisite, that I like not to see aught of meaner matter mixed with it. Forgive my petulance and often, I fear, ill founded criticisms, and forgive me that I have, by this time, made your eyes and head ach with my long letter. But I cannot forego hastily the pleasure and pride of thus conversing with you.

You did not tell me whether I was to include the Conciones ad Populum in my remarks on your poems. They are not unfrequently sublime, and I think you could not do better than to turn 'em into verse,—if you have nothing else to do. Allen I am sorry to say is a *confirmed* Atheist. Stodart, or Stothard, a cold hearted well bred conceited disciple of Godwin, does him no good. His wife has several daughters (one of 'em as old as himself). Surely there is something unnatural in such a marriage. How I sympathise with you on the dull duty of a reviewer, and heartily damn with you Ned Evans and the Prosodist. I shall however wait impatiently for the articles in the Crit. Rev., next month, because they are *yours*. Young Evans (W. Evans, a branch of a family

you were once so intimate with) is come into our office, and sends his love to you. Coleridge, I devoutly wish that Fortune, who has made sport with you so long, may play one freak more, throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snug-ify you for life. 'Tis a selfish but natural wish for me, cast as I am "on life's wide plain, friend-less." Are you acquainted with Bowles? I see, by his last Elegy (written at Bath), you are near neighbours. "And I can think I can see the groves again—was it the voice of thee—Twas not the voice of thee, my buried friend—who dries with her dark locks the tender tear"—are touches as true to nature as any in his other Elegy, written at the hot wells, about poor Russell, &c.—You are doubtless acquainted with it.—Thursday.

I do not know that I entirely agree with you in your stricture upon my Sonnet to Innocence. To men whose hearts are not quite deadend by their commerce with the world, Innocence (no longer familiar) becomes an awful idea. So I felt when I wrote it. Your other censures (qualified and sweeten'd, tho', with praises somewhat extravagant) I perfectly coincide with. Yet I chuse to retain the word "lunar"—indulge a "lunatic" in his loyalty to his mistress the moon. I have just been reading a most pathetic copy of verses on Sophia Pringle, who was hanged and burn'd for coining. One of the strokes of pathos (which are very many, all somewhat obscure) is "She lifted up her guilty forger to heaven." A note explains by forger her right hand with which she forged or coined the base metal! For pathos read bathos. You have put me out of conceit with my blank verse by your Religious Musings. I think it will come to nothing. I do not like 'em enough to send 'em. I have just been reading a book, which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you—it is "Izaak Walton's Complete Angler!" All the scientific part you may omit in reading. The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties, and will charm you. Many pretty old verses are interspersed. This letter, which would be a week's work reading only, I do not wish you to answer in less than a month. I shall be richly content with a letter from you some day early in July—tho' if you get any how *settled* before then pray let me know it immediately—'twould give me such satisfaction. Concerning the unitarian chapel, the salary is the only scruple that the most rigid moralist would admit as valid. Concerning the tutorage—is not the salary low, and absence from your family unavoidable? London is the only fostering soil for Genius.

Nothing more occurs just now, so I will leave you in mercy one small white spot empty below, to repose your eyes upon, fatigued as they must be with the wilderness of words they have by this time painfully travell'd thro'. God love you, Coleridge, and prosper you

thro' life, tho' mine will be loss if your lot is to be cast at Bristol or at Nottingham or any where but London. Our loves to Mrs. C—— C. L.

NOTE

[Southey's *Joan of Arc*, with contributions to Book II. by Coleridge, had been published in quarto by Cottle. Coleridge contributed to Book II. the first 450 lines, with the exception of 141-143, 148-222, 266-272 and 286-291. He subsequently took out his lines and gave them new shape as the poem "The Destiny of Nations," printed in *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817. All subsequent editions of Southey's poem appeared without Coleridge's portion. The passages on page 26 and page 28 were Southey's. Those at the beginning of the second book were Coleridge's. The simile of the Laplander may be read in "The Destiny of Nations" (lines 63-79). These were the reasons given by Coleridge for monarchs making war:—

> When Luxury and Lust's exhausted stores
> No more can rouse the appetites of KINGS;
> When the low Flattery of their reptile Lords
> Falls flat and heavy on the accustomed ear;
> When Eunuchs sing, and Fools buffoon'ry make,
> And Dancers writhe their harlot limbs in vain:
> Then War and all its dread vicissitudes
> Pleasingly agitate their stagnant hearts. . . .

The 447th line was Coleridge's. This is the passage:—

> Whether thy LAW with unrefracted Ray
> Beam on the PROPHET'S purged Eye, or if
> Diseasing Realms the ENTHUSIAST, wild of thought,
> Scatter new frenzies on the infected Throng,
> THOU, Both inspiring and foredooming, Both
> Fit INSTRUMENTS and best of perfect END. Lines 446-451.

With page 98 we come to Southey again, the remaining references being to him. "Cold is Cadwallo's tongue" is from Gray's *Bard;* "with all their trumpery" is from *Paradise Lost*, III., 475. The maid baffles the doctors in Book III.; page 126 is in Book IV.; the personifications are in Book VI.; the converse between Joan and Conrade is in Book IV.; page 313 is at the beginning of Book IX.; and pages 315, 347 and 361 are also in Book IX. Southey in the preface to *Joan of Arc*, speaking of Homer, says: "Pope has disguised him in fop-finery and Cowper has stripped him naked." "Crazy Kate" is an episode in *The Task* ("The Sofa").

The "Monody on John Henderson," by Joseph Cottle, was printed anonymously in a volume of poems in 1795, and again in *The Malvern Hills*. John Henderson (1757-1788) was an eccen-

tric scholar of Bristol. The lines praised by Lamb are the 4th, 12th and 64th. The poem must not be confused with the Monody on Henderson, the actor, by G. D. Harley. Lamb misquotes the line in "Hamlet": see Act I., Sc. 4, 44, 45. Lamb now turns again to Coleridge's *Poems*. The poem on the 13th and 14th pages of this little volume was "To the Rev. W. J. H." The 21st Effusion was that entitled "Composed while Climbing the Left Ascent of Brockley Coomb." The 35th Effusion is known as "The Æolian Harp." The letter from Shurton Bars is the poem beginning—

Nor travels my meand'ring eye.

The 4th Epistle is that to Joseph Cottle, Coleridge's publisher and the author of the "Monody on Henderson," referred to in Coleridge's verses. The lines which Lamb quotes are Cottle's. The poem by Sara Coleridge is "The Silver Thimble." The passage in the "Religious Musings," for which Lamb is thankful as a "child of fancy," is the last paragraph:—

Contemplant Spirits! ye that hover o'er
With untired gaze the immeasurable fount
Ebullient with creative Deity!
And ye of plastic power, that interfused
Roll through the grosser and material mass
In organising surge! Holies of God!
(And what if Monads of the infinite mind?)
I haply journeying my immortal course
Shall sometime join your mystic choir!
Till then
I discipline my young noviciate thought
In ministeries of heart-stirring song,
And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters—The glad stream
Flows to the ray and warbles as it flows.

"You came to Town . . ." Soon after his engagement with Sara Fricker, his heart being still not wholly healed of its passion for Mary Evans, Coleridge had gone to London from Bristol, nominally to arrange for the publication of his *Fall of Robespierre*, and had resumed intercourse with Lamb and other old Christ's Hospital friends. There he remained until Southey forcibly took him back in January, 1795. From what Lamb says of the loss of two friends we must suppose, in default of other information, that he had to give up his Anna at the same time. The loss of reason, however, to which he refers did not come until the end of the year 1795.

"Many an holy lay . . ." The lines of which Lamb is thinking are these—

> Holy be the Lay,
> Which mourning soothes the mourner on his way!

quoted by Coleridge in the preface to his *Poems*, 1796.

The 19th Effusion, afterwards called "On a Discovery Made Too Late;" the 28th, "The Kiss;" the 29th, "Imitated from Ossian."

"How blest with Ye the Path . . ." Lines 1 and 2 of Bowles' sonnet "In Memoriam."

"Your monody." This, not to be confounded with Cottle's "Monody on Henderson," was Coleridge's "Monody on Chatterton." Lamb's emendations were not accepted. As regards "The Man of Ross," the couplet beginning "Friend to the friendless" ultimately had a place both in that poem and in the Monody, but the couplet "and o'er the dowried virgin" was never replaced in either. The lines on spring, page 28, are "Lines to a Beautiful Spring." Dr. Forster (Faustus) was the hero of the nursery rhyme, whose scholars danced out of England into France and Spain and back again. The epitaph on an infant was in *The Watchman*, No. IX. (see note on page 63). The poem "Edmund" is called "Lines on a Friend who died of a frenzy fever induced by calumnious reports." The lines in "Absence" are those in the second stanza of the poem. They run thus:—

> Ah fair Delights! that o'er my soul
> On Memory's wing, like shadows fly!
> Ah Flowers! which Joy from Eden stole
> While Innocence stood smiling by!—
> But cease, fond Heart! this bootless moan:
> Those Hours on rapid Pinions flown
> Shall yet return, by ABSENCE crowned,
> And scatter livelier roses round.

The 19th Effusion, beginning, "Thou bleedest, my poor heart," is known as "On a Discovery Made Too Late." The 20th Effusion is the sonnet to Schiller. The lines which were sent to Lamb, written in December, 1794, are called "To a Friend, together with an unfinished poem" ("Religious Musings"). Coleridge's "Restless Gale" is the imitation of Ossian, beginning, "The stream with languid murmur creeps." "Foodful" occurs thus in the lines "To an Infant":—

> Alike the foodful fruit and scorching fire
> Awake thy eager grasp and young desire.

Coleridge did not alter the phrase.

Lamb contributed four effusions to this volume of Coleridge's: the 7th, to Mrs. Siddons (written in conjunction with Coleridge),

the 11th, 12th and 13th. All were signed C. L. Coleridge had permitted himself to make various alterations. The following parallel will show the kind of treatment to which Lamb objected :—

Lamb's Original Effusion (11)	As Altered by Coleridge
Was it some sweet device of Faery	Was it some sweet device of faery land
That mock'd my steps with many a lonely glade,	That mock'd my steps with many a lonely glade,
And fancied wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid ?	And fancied wand'rings with a fair-hair'd maid ?
Have these things been ? or what rare witchery,	Have these things been ? Or did the wizard wand
Impregning with delights the charmed air,	Of Merlin wave, impregning vacant air,
Enlighted up the semblance of a smile	And kindle up the vision of a smile
In those fine eyes ? methought they spake the while	In those blue eyes, that seem'd to speak the while
Soft soothing things, which might enforce despair	Such tender things, as might enforce Despair
To drop the murdering knife, and let go by	To drop the murth'ring knife, and let go by
His foul resolve. And does the lonely glade	His fell resolve ? Ah me ! the lonely glade
Still court the foot-steps of the fair-hair'd maid ?	Still courts the footsteps of the fair-hair'd maid,
Still in her locks the gales of summer sigh ?	Among whose locks the west-winds love to sigh :
While I forlorn do wander reckless where,	But I forlorn do wander, reckless where,
And 'mid my wanderings meet no Anna there.	And mid my wand'rings find no Anna there !

In Effusion 12 Lamb had written :—

> Or we might sit and tell some tender tale
> Of faithful vows repaid by cruel scorn,
> A tale of true love, or of friend forgot ;
> And I would teach thee, lady, how to rail
> In gentle sort, on those who practise not
> Or Love or pity, though of woman born.

Coleridge made it :—

> But ah ! sweet scenes of fancied bliss, adieu !
> On rose-leaf beds amid your faery bowers
> I all too long have lost the dreamy hours !
> Beseems it now the sterner Muse to woo,
> If haply she her golden meed impart
> To realize the vision of the heart.

Again in the 13th Effusion, "Written at Midnight, by the Sea-side, after a Voyage," Lamb had dotted out the last two lines. Coleridge substituted the couplet :—

> How Reason reel'd ! What gloomy transports rose !
> Till the rude dashings rock'd them to repose.

"Thinking on divers things foredone." Adapted from Burton's "Author's Abstract of Melancholy," prefixed to the *Anatomy*:—

> When I go musing all alone,
> Thinking of divers things fore-known.

"Ask my friend the aiding verse." From Coleridge's lines "To a Friend" (Lamb), line 4:—

> I ask not now, my friend! the aiding verse.

"*Propino tibi alterandum* . . ."—"I pass it on to you for alteration," etc. Probably a modification of Terence (*Eun.*, V., 9, 57), "hunc comedendum et deridendum vobis propino."

Effusion 2, which Lamb would omit, was the sonnet "To Burke;" Effusion 3, "To Mercy" (on Pitt); Effusion 5, "To Erskine;" Effusion 7, Lamb and Coleridge's joint sonnet "To Mrs. Siddons;" and Effusion 8, "To Koskiusko." The "Lines Written in Early Youth" were afterwards called "Lines on an Autumnal Evening." The poem called "Recollection," in *The Watchman*, was reborn as "Sonnet to the River Otter." The lines on the early blossom were praised by Lamb in a previous letter (see page 8). The 10th Effusion was the sonnet to Earl Stanhope.

Godwin was William Godwin, the philosopher. We shall later see much of him. It was Allen's wife, not Stoddart's, who had a grown-up daughter.

I have not identified the prosodist, but *Ned Evans* was a novel in four volumes, published in 1796, an imitation of *Tom Jones*, which presumably Coleridge was reviewing for the *Critical Review*. A notice, a very short one, appeared in the November number.

Young W. Evans is said by Mr. Dykes Campbell to have been the only son of the Mrs. Evans who befriended Coleridge when he was at Christ's Hospital, the mother of his first love, Mary Evans. Evans was at school with Coleridge and Lamb. We shall meet with him again.

"On life's wide plain, friendless." From Bowles' sonnet "At Oxford, 1786":—

> Yet on life's wide plain
> Left fatherless, where many a wanderer sighs
> Hourly, and oft our road is lone and long.

William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850), the sonneteer, who had exerted so powerful a poetical influence on Coleridge's mind, was at this time rector of Cricklade in Wiltshire (1792-1797), but had been ill at Bath. The elegy in question was "Elegiac Stanzas written during sickness at Bath, December, 1795." The lines quoted by Lamb are respectively in the 6th, 4th, 5th and 19th Stanzas.

This was Lamb's sonnet to Innocence:—

> We were two pretty babes, the youngest she,
> The youngest, and the loveliest far, I ween,
> And INNOCENCE her name. The time has been,
> We two did love each other's company;
> Time was, we two had wept to have been apart.
> But when by show of seeming good beguiled,
> I left the garb and manners of a child,
> And my first love for man's society,
> Defiling with the world my virgin heart—
> My loved companion dropped a tear, and fled,
> And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
> Beloved, who shall tell me where thou art—
> In what delicious Eden to be found—
> That I may seek thee the wide world around?

Coleridge's strictures upon it no longer exist. In a footnote to the pamphlet of sonnets which he compiled during this year (see page 69) he praised it.

Sophia Pringle. Probably the subject of a Catnach or other popular broadside. I have not found it.

Izaak Walton. Lamb returns to praises of *The Compleat Angler* in his letter to Robert Lloyd referred to on page 212.

The reference to the Unitarian chapel bears probably upon an offer of a pulpit to Coleridge, who at that time occasionally preached. The tutorship was probably that offered to Coleridge by Mrs. Evans of Darley Hall (no relation to Mary Evans) who wished him to teach her sons. Neither project was carried through.]

LETTER 4

(Apparently a continuation of a letter the first part of which is missing)

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Begun] Monday Night [June 13, 1796].

UNFURNISHED at present with any sheet-filling subject, I shall continue my letter gradually and journal-wise. My second thoughts entirely coincide with your comments on "Joan of Arc," and I can only wonder at my childish judgment which overlooked the 1st book and could prefer the 9th: not that I was insensible to the soberer beauties of the former, but the latter caught me with its glare of magic,—the former, however, left a more pleasing general recollection in my mind. Let me add, the 1st book was the favourite of my sister—and *I* now, with Joan, often "think on Domremi and the fields of Arc." I must not pass over without acknowledging my obligations to your full and satisfactory account

of personifications. I have read it again and again, and it will be a guide to my future taste. Perhaps I had estimated Southey's merits too much by number, weight, and measure. I now agree completely and entirely in your opinion of the genius of Southey. Your own image of melancholy is illustrative of what you teach, and in itself masterly. I conjecture it is "disbranched" from one of your embryo "hymns." When they are mature of birth (were I you) I should print 'em in one separate volume, with "Religious Musings" and your part of the "Joan of Arc." Birds of the same soaring wing should hold on their flight in company. Once for all (and by renewing the subject you will only renew in me the condemnation of Tantalus), I hope to be able to pay you a visit (if you are then at Bristol) some time in the latter end of August or beginning of September for a week or fortnight; before that time, office business puts an absolute veto on my coming.

> "And if a sigh that speaks regret of happier times appear,
> A glimpse of joy that we have met shall shine and dry the tear."

Of the blank verses I spoke of, the following lines are the only tolerably complete ones I have writ out of not more than one hundred and fifty. That I get on so slowly you may fairly impute to want of practice in composition, when I declare to you that (the few verses which you have seen excepted) I have not writ fifty lines since I left school. It may not be amiss to remark that my grandmother (on whom the verses are written) lived housekeeper in a family the fifty or sixty last years of her life—that she was a woman of exemplary piety and goodness—and for many years before her death was terribly afflicted with a cancer in her breast which she bore with true Christian patience. You may think that I have not kept enough apart the ideas of her heavenly and her earthly master but recollect I have designedly given in to her own way of feeling—and if she had a failing, 'twas that she respected her master's family too much, not reverenced her Maker too little. The lines begin imperfectly, as I may probably connect 'em if I finish at all,—and if I do, Biggs shall print 'em in a more economical way than you yours, for (Sonnets and all) they won't make a thousand lines as I propose completing 'em, and the substance must be wire-drawn.

Tuesday Evening, June 14, 1796.

I am not quite satisfied now with the Chatterton, and with your leave will try my hand at it again. A master joiner, you know, may leave a cabinet to be finished, when his own hands are full. To your list of illustrative personifications, into which a fine imagination enters, I will take leave to add the following from

Beaumont and Fletcher's "Wife for a Month;" 'tis the conclusion of a description of a sea-fight;—"The game of *death* was never played so nobly; the meagre thief grew wanton in his mischiefs, and his shrunk hollow eyes smiled on his ruins." There is fancy in these of a lower order from "Bonduca;"—"Then did I see these valiant men of Britain, like boding owls creep into tods of ivy, and hoot their fears to one another nightly." Not that it is a personification; only it just caught my eye in a little extract book I keep, which is full of quotations from B. and F. in particular, in which authors I can't help thinking there is a greater richness of poetical fancy than in any one, Shakspeare excepted. Are you acquainted with Massinger? At a hazard I will trouble you with a passage from a play of his called "A Very Woman." The lines are spoken by a lover (disguised) to his faithless mistress. You will remark the fine effect of the double endings. You will by your ear distinguish the lines, for I write 'em as prose. "Not far from where my father lives, *a lady*, a neighbour by, blest with as great a *beauty* as nature durst bestow without *undoing*, dwelt, and most happily, as I thought then, and blest the house a thousand times she *dwelt in*. This beauty, in the blossom of my youth, when my first fire knew no adulterate *incense*, nor I no way to flatter but my *fondness;* in all the bravery my friends could *show me*, in all the faith my innocence could *give me*, in the best language my true tongue could *tell me*, and all the broken sighs my sick heart *lend me*, I sued and served; long did I serve this *lady*, long was my travail, long my trade to *win her;* with all the duty of my soul I SERVED HER." "Then she must love." "She did, but never me: she could not *love me;* she would not love, she hated,—more, she *scorn'd me;* and in so poor and base a way *abused me* for all my services, for all my *bounties*, so bold neglects flung on me"—"What out of love, and worthy love, I *gave her* (shame to her most unworthy mind,) to fools, to girls, to fiddlers and her boys she flung, all in disdain of me." One more passage strikes my eye from B. and F.'s "Palamon and Arcite." One of 'em complains in prison: "This is all our world; we shall know nothing here but one another, hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes; the vine shall grow, but we shall never see it," &c. Is not the last circumstance exquisite? I mean not to lay myself open by saying they exceed Milton, and perhaps Collins, in sublimity. But don't you conceive all poets after Shakspeare yield to 'em in variety of genius? Massinger treads close on their heels; but you are most probably as well acquainted with his writings as your humble servant. My quotations, in that case, will only serve to expose my barrenness of matter. Southey in simplicity and tenderness, is excelled decidedly only, I think, by Beaumont and F. in his [their]

"Maid's Tragedy" and some parts of "Philaster" in particular, and elsewhere occasionally; and perhaps by Cowper in his "Crazy Kate," and in parts of his translation, such as the speeches of Hecuba and Andromache. I long to know your opinion of that translation. The Odyssey especially is surely very Homeric. What nobler than the appearance of Phœbus at the beginning of the Iliad—the lines ending with "Dread sounding, bounding on the silver bow!"

I beg you will give me your opinion of the translation; it afforded me high pleasure. As curious a specimen of translation as ever fell into my hands, is a young man's in our office, of a French novel. What in the original was literally "amiable delusions of the fancy," he proposed to render "the fair frauds of the imagination!" I had much trouble in licking the book into any meaning at all. Yet did the knave clear fifty or sixty pounds by subscription and selling the copyright. The book itself not a week's work! To-day's portion of my journalising epistle has been very dull and poverty-stricken. I will here end.

Tuesday Night.

I have been drinking egg-hot and smoking Oronooko (associated circumstances, which ever forcibly recall to my mind our evenings and nights at the Salutation); my eyes and brain are heavy and asleep, but my heart is awake; and if words came as ready as ideas, and ideas as feelings, I could say ten hundred kind things. Coleridge, you know not my supreme happiness at having one on earth (though counties separate us) whom I can call a friend. Remember you those tender lines of Logan?—

> "Our broken friendships we deplore,
> And loves of youth that are no more;
> No after friendships e'er can raise
> Th' endearments of our early days,
> And ne'er the heart such fondness prove,
> As when we first began to love."

I am writing at random, and half-tipsy, what you may not *equally* understand, as you will be sober when you read it; but *my* sober and *my* half-tipsy hours you are alike a sharer in. Good night.

> "Then up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink,
> Craigdoroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink."
>
> BURNS.

Thursday [June 16, 1796].

I am now in high hopes to be able to visit you, if perfectly convenient on your part, by the end of next month—perhaps the last week or fortnight in July. A change of scene and

a change of faces would do me good, even if that scene were not to be Bristol, and those faces Coleridge's and his friends. In the words of Terence, a little altered, "Tædet me hujus quotidiani mundi." I am heartily sick of the every-day scenes of life. I shall half wish you unmarried (don't show this to Mrs. C.) for one evening only, to have the pleasure of smoking with you, and drinking egg-hot in some little smoky room in a pot-house, for I know not yet how I shall like you in a decent room, and looking quite happy. My best love and respects to Sara notwithstanding.

Yours sincerely,
CHARLES LAMB.

NOTE

[Coleridge's image of melancholy will be found in the lines "Melancholy—a fragment." It was published in *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817, and in a note Coleridge said that the verses were printed in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1794. They were really printed in the *Morning Post*, December 12, 1797. Coleridge had probably sent them to Lamb in MS. The "hymns" came to nothing. "Disbranched" is a quotation from "Religious Musings":—

> From the tree
> Of Knowledge, ere the vernal sap had risen,
> Rudely disbranch'd!
>
> Lines 283-285 (1796).

"And if a sigh that speaks . . ." Cowper, "To the Rev. Mr. Newton: an Invitation into the Country." From the last stanza, incorrectly quoted.

"The following lines." Lamb's poem "The Grandame" was presumably included in this letter. I give the text as it was printed in Charles Lloyd's *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer* later in the year :—

THE GRANDAME

> On the hill top green
> Hard by the house of prayer (an humble roof,
> In nought distinguish'd from its neighbour barn
> Save by a slender tapering length of spire),
> The Grandam sleeps. A plain stone barely tells
> Her name and date to the chance passenger:
> For lowly born was she, and long had eat
> Well-earn'd the bread of service; hers was else
> A mounting spirit; one that entertain'd
> Scorn of base action, deed dishonourable,
> Or aught unseemly. I remember well
> Her reverend image; I remember too
> With what a zeal she serv'd her master's house;
> And how the prattling tongue of garrulous age

Delighted to recount the oft-told tale,
Or anecdote domestic: wise she was,
And wond'rous skill'd in genealogies,
And could in apt and voluble terms discourse
Of births, of titles, and alliances;
Of marriages and intermarriages;
Relationships remote or near of kin;
Of friends offended, family disgrac'd,
Maiden high-born but wayward, disobeying
Parental strict injunction, and regardless
Of unmix'd blood, and ancestry remote,
Stooping to wed with one of low degree.
But these are not thy praises, and I wrong
Her honour'd memory, recording chiefly
Things light or trivial. Better 'twere to tell,
How with a nobler zeal and warmer love
She serv'd her heavenly Master. I have seen
That reverend form bent down with age and pain,
And rankling malady—yet not for that
Ceas'd she to praise her Maker, or withdrew
Her trust from him, her faith, and humble hope:
So meekly had she learn'd to bear her cross.
For she had studied patience in the school
Of Christ; much comfort she had thence deriv'd,
And was a follower of the NAZARENE.

Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, died July 31, 1792, aged seventy-nine, and was buried in Widford churchyard. She had been for many years housekeeper in the Plumer family at Blakesware. On William Plumer's moving to Gilston, a neighbouring seat, in 1767, she had sole charge of the Blakesware mansion, where her grandchildren used to visit her. Compare Lamb's *Elia* essays "Blakesmoor in H——shire" and "Dream-Children."

N. Biggs was the printer of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797.

Lamb had begun his amendment of Coleridge's "Monody on the Death of Chatterton" in his letter of June 10. Coleridge's illustrative personifications, here referred to, are in that poem. The extract book from which Lamb copied his quotations from Beaumont and Fletcher and Massinger was, he afterwards tells us, destroyed; but similar volumes, which he filled later, are preserved at Rowfant by Mr. Godfrey Locker-Lampson. The extract from "A Wife for a Month" is in Act VI., Scene 1. The extract from "Bonduca" is from Act I., Scene 1; the whole passage was included in Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808. The extract from Palamon and Arcite ("The Two Noble Kinsmen") is in *Dramatic Specimens* in full: from Act II., Scene 2. The passage from Massinger, which is also in *Dramatic Specimens*, we shall meet again as the motto to Lamb's part in Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition, 1797.

Cowper's translation.—Writing to Charles Lloyd, sen., in 1809, Lamb says of Cowper as a translator of Homer that he "delays you . . . walking over a Bowling Green."

Canon Ainger possessed a copy of the book translated by Lamb's fellow-clerk. It was called *Sentimental Tablets of the Good Pamphile.* "Translated from the French of M. Gorjy by P. S. Dupuy of the East India House, 1795." Among the subscribers' names were Thomas Bye (5 copies), Ball, Evans, Savory (2 copies), and Lamb himself.

Logan's lines are in the "Ode on the Death of a Young Lady," 8th Stanza, lines 3 and 4, and 9th Stanza, lines 1-4; Burns' in "The Whistle," Stanza 17.

"*Tædet me hujus quotidiani mundi.*" Terence's words are (*Eunuchus*, II., 3, 6): "Tædet quotidianarum harum formarum" —"I am aweary of these everyday shapes." Lamb was very fond of this quotation.]

LETTER 5

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably begun on Wednesday, June 29. P.M. July 1, 1796.]

THE first moment I can come I will, but my hopes of coming yet a while yet hang on a ticklish thread. The coach I come by is immaterial as I shall so easily by your direction find ye out. My mother is grown so entirely helpless (not having any use of her limbs) that Mary is necessarily confined from ever sleeping out, she being her bed fellow. She thanks you tho' and will accompany me in spirit. Most exquisite are the lines from Withers. Your own lines introductory to your poem on Self run smoothly and pleasurably, and I exhort you to continue 'em. What shall I say to your Dactyls? They are what you would call good per se, but a parody on some of 'em is just now suggesting itself, and you shall have it rough and unlicked. I mark with figures the lines parodied.

4.—Sórely your Dáctyls do drág along limp-footed.
5.—Sád is the méasure that hangs a clod round 'em so,
6.—Méagre, and lafiguid, procláiming its wrétchedness.
1.—Wéary, unsátisfied, nót little sick of 'em,
11.—Cóld is my tired heart, I have no chárity.
2.—Páinfully tráv'lling thus óver the rúgged road.
7.—Ó begone, Méasure, half Látin, half Énglish, then.
12.—Dismal your Dáctyls are, Gód help ye, rhyming Ones.

I *possibly* may not come this fortnight—therefore all thou hast to do is not to look for me any particular day, only to write word immediately if at any time you quit Bristol, lest I come and Taffy be not at home. I *hope* I can come in a day or two. But young Savory of my office is suddenly taken ill in this very nick of time and I must officiate for him till he can come to work again. Had

the knave gone sick and died and putrefied at any other time, philosophy might have afforded one comfort, but just now I have no patience with him. Quarles I am as great a stranger to as I was to Withers. I wish you would try and do something to bring our elder bards into more general fame. I writhe with indignation when in books of Criticism, where common place quotation is heaped upon quotation, I find no mention of such men as Massinger, or B. and Fl, men with whom succeeding Dramatic Writers (Otway alone excepted) can bear no manner of comparison. Stupid Knox hath noticed none of 'em among his extracts.

Thursday.—Mrs. C. can scarce guess how she has gratified me by her very kind letter and sweet little poem. I feel that I *should* thank her in rhyme, but she must take my acknowledgment at present in plain honest prose. The uncertainty in which I yet stand whether I can come or no damps my spirits, reduces me a degree below prosaical, and keeps me in a suspense that fluctuates between hope and fear. Hope is a charming, lively, blue-eyed wench, and I am always glad of her company, but could dispense with the visitor she brings with her, her younger sister, Fear, a white-liver'd, lilly-cheeked, bashful, palpitating, awkward hussey, that hangs like a green girl at her sister's apronstrings, and will go with her whithersoever *she* goes. For the life and soul of me I could not improve those lines in your poem on the Prince and Princess, so I changed them to what you bid me and left 'em at Perry's. I think 'em altogether good, and do not see why you were sollicitous about *any* alteration. I have not yet seen, but will make it my business to see, to-day's *Chronicle*, for your verses on Horne Took. Dyer stanza'd him in one of the papers t'other day, but I think unsuccessfully. Tooke's friends' meeting was I suppose a dinner of CONDOLENCE. I am not sorry to find you (for all Sara) immersed in clouds of smoke and metaphysic. You know I had a sneaking kindness for this last noble science, and you taught me some smattering of it. I look to become no mean proficient under your tuition. Coleridge, what do you mean by saying you wrote to me about Plutarch and Porphyry—I received no such letter, nor remember a syllable of the matter, yet am not apt to forget any part of your epistles, least of all an injunction like that. I will cast about for 'em, tho' I am a sad hand to know what books are worth, and both those worthy gentlemen are alike out of my line. To-morrow I shall be less suspensive and in better cue to write, so good bye at present.

Friday Evening.—That execrable aristocrat and knave Richardson has given me an absolute refusal of leave! The *poor man*

cannot guess at my disappointment. Is it not hard, "this dread dependance on the low bred mind?" Continue to write to me tho', and I must be content—— Our loves and best good wishes attend upon you both. LAMB.

Savory did return, but there are 2 or 3 more ill and absent, which was the plea for refusing me. I will never commit my peace of mind by depending on such a wretch for a favor in future, so shall never have heart to ask for holidays again. The man next him in office, Cartwright, furnished him with the objections.

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The Dactyls were Coleridge's only in the third stanza; the remainder were Southey's. The poem is known as "The Soldier's Wife," printed in Southey's *Poems*, 1797, running thus:—

Weary way-wanderer languid and sick at heart
Travelling painfully over the rugged road,
Wild-visag'd Wanderer! ah for thy heavy chance!

Sorely thy little one drags by thee bare-footed,
Cold is the baby that hangs at thy bending back,
Meagre and livid and screaming its wretchedness.

Woe-begone mother, half anger, half agony,
As over thy shoulder thou lookest to hush the babe,
Bleakly the blinding snow beats in thy hagged face.

Thy husband will never return from the war again,
Cold is thy hopeless heart even as Charity—
Cold are thy famish'd babes—God help thee, widow'd One

Bristol, 1795.

Later Southey revised the verses. *The Anti-Jacobin* had the following parody of them:—

THE SOLDIER'S FRIEND

Come, little drummer boy, lay down your knapsack here:
I am the soldier's friend—here are some books for you;
Nice clever books, by TOM PAINE, the philanthropist.

Here's half-a-crown for you—here are some hand-bills too—
Go to the barracks, and give all the soldiers some.
Tell them the sailors are all in a mutiny.
[*Exit drummer boy, with hand-bills and half-crown.—Manet soldier's friend.*

Liberty's friends thus all learn to amalgamate,
Freedom's volcanic explosion prepares itself,
Despots shall bow to the fasces of liberty,
Reason, philosophy, "fiddledum piddledum,"
Peace and fraternity, higgledy, piggledy,
Higgledy, piggledy, "fiddledum diddledum."
Et cætera, et cætera, et cætera.

Young Savory was probably a relative of Hester Savory, whom we shall meet on page 261. He entered the East India House on the same day that Lamb did.

We do not know what were the lines from Wither which Coleridge had sent to Lamb; but Lamb himself eventually did much to bring him and the elder bards into more general fame—in the *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, and in the essay "On the Poetical Works of George Wither," in the *Works*, 1818.

Stupid Knox was Vicesimus Knox (1752-1821), the editor of *Elegant Extracts* in many forms.

"Her . . . sweet little poem." Sara Coleridge's verses no longer exist. See Lamb's next letter for his poetical reply.

"Like a green girl." See "Hamlet," I., 3, 101.

Coleridge's poem on the Prince and Princess, "On a Late Connubial Rupture in High Life," was not accepted by Perry, of the *Morning Chronicle*. It appeared in the *Monthly Magazine*, September, 1796. The "Verses addressed to J. Horne Tooke and the company who met on June 28, 1796, to celebrate his poll at the Westminster Election" were not printed in the *Morning Chronicle*. Tooke had opposed Charles James Fox, who polled 5,160 votes, and Sir Alan Gardner, who polled 4,814, against his own 2,819.

Dyer was George Dyer (1755-1841), an old Christ's Hospitaller (but before Lamb and Coleridge's time), of whom we shall see much—Lamb's famous G. D.

William Richardson was Accountant-General of the East India House at that time; Charles Cartwright, his Deputy.

"The dread dependance on the low-bred mind." From the first version (1790) of Coleridge's "Monody on Chatterton."]

LETTER 6

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

The 5th July, 1796. [P.M. Same date.]

TO SARA AND HER SAMUEL

WAS it so hard a thing? I did but ask
A fleeting holy day. One little week,
Or haply two, had bounded my request.

What if the jaded Steer, who all day long
Had borne the heat and labour of the plough,

When Evening came and her sweet cooling hour,
Should seek to trespass on a neighbour copse,
Where greener herbage waved, or clearer streams
Invited him to slake his burning thirst?
That Man were crabbed, who should say him Nay:
That Man were churlish, who should drive him thence!

A blessing light upon your heads, ye good,
Ye hospitable pair. I may not come,
To catch on Clifden's heights the summer gale:
I may not come, a pilgrim, to the "Vales
Where Avon winds," to taste th' inspiring waves
Which Shakespere drank, our British Helicon:
Or, with mine eye intent on Redcliffe towers,
To drop a tear for that Mysterious youth,
Cruelly slighted, who to London Walls,
In evil hour, shap'd his disastrous course.

Complaints, begone; begone, ill-omen'd thoughts—
For yet again, and lo! from Avon banks
Another "Minstrel" cometh! Youth beloved,
God and good angels guide thee on thy way,
And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love.

C. L.

LETTER 7

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

the 6th July [P.M. July 7, 1796.]

SUBSTITUTE in room of that last confused & incorrect Paragraph, following the words "disastrous course," these lines

Vide 3d page of this epistle. no

With better hopes, I trust, from Avon's vales
This other "minstrel" cometh. Youth endear'd,
God & good Angels guide thee on thy road,
And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love.

[*Lamb has crossed through the above lines.*]

Let us prose.

What can I do till you send word what priced and placed house you should like? Islington (possibly) you would not like, to me 'tis classical ground. Knightsbridge is a desirable situation for the air of the parks. St. George's Fields is convenient for its contiguity

to the Bench. Chuse! But are you really coming to town? The hope of it has entirely disarmed my petty disappointment of its nettles. Yet I rejoice so much on my own account, that I fear I do not feel enough pure satisfaction on yours. Why, surely, the joint editorship of the Chron: must be a very comfortable & secure living for a man. But should not you read French, or do you? & can you write with sufficient moderation, as 'tis call'd, when one suppresses the one half of what one feels, or could say, on a subject, to chime in the better with popular lukewarmness?—White's "Letters" are near publication. Could you review 'em, or get 'em reviewed? Are you not connected with the Crit: Rev:? His frontispiece is a good conceit: Sir John learning to dance, to please Madame Page, in dress of doublet, etc., from [for] the upper half; & modern pantaloons, with shoes, etc., of the 18th century, from [for] the lower half—& the whole work is full of goodly quips & rare fancies, "all deftly masqued like hoar antiquity"—much superior to Dr. Kenrick's Falstaff's Wedding, which you may have seen. Allen sometimes laughs at Superstition, & Religion, & the like. A living fell vacant lately in the gift of the Hospital. White informed him that he stood a fair chance for it. He scrupled & scrupled about it, and at last (to use his own words) "tampered" with *Godwin* to know whether the thing was honest or not. *Godwin* said nay to it, & Allen rejected the living! Could the blindest Poor Papish have bowed more servilely to his Priest or Casuist? Why sleep the Watchman's answers to that *Godwin*? I beg you will not delay to alter, if you mean to keep, those last lines I sent you. Do that, & read these for your pains:—

TO THE POET COWPER

Cowper, I thank my God that thou art heal'd!
Thine was the sorest malady of all;
And I am sad to think that it should light
Upon the worthy head! But thou art heal'd,
And thou art yet, we trust, the destin'd man,
Born to reanimate the Lyre, whose chords
Have slumber'd, and have idle lain so long,
To the immortal sounding of whose strings
Did Milton frame the stately-pacèd verse;
Among whose wires with lighter finger playing,
Our elder bard, Spenser, a gentle name,
The Lady Muses' dearest darling child,
Elicited the deftest tunes yet heard
In Hall or Bower, taking the delicate Ear
Of Sydney, & his peerless Maiden Queen.

Thou, then, take up the mighty Epic strain,
Cowper, of England's Bards, the wisest & the best.

1796.

I have read your climax of praises in those 3 reviews. These mighty spouters-out of panegyric waters have, 2 of 'em, scattered their spray even upon me! & the waters are cooling & refreshing. Prosaically, the Monthly Reviewers have made indeed a large article of it, & done you justice. The Critical have, in their wisdom, selected not the very best specimens, & notice not, except as one name on the muster-roll, the "Religious Musings." I suspect Master Dyer to have been the writer of that article, as the substance of it was the very remarks & the very language he used to me one day. I fear you will not accord entirely with my sentiments of Cowper, as *exprest* above, (perhaps scarcely just), but the poor Gentleman has just recovered from his Lunacies, & that begets pity, & pity love, and love admiration, & then it goes hard with People but they lie! Have you read the Ballad called "Leonora," in the second Number of the "Monthly Magazine"? If you have !!!!!!!!!!!!!! There is another fine song, from the same author (Berger), in the 3d No., of scarce inferior merit; & (vastly below these) there are some happy specimens of English hexameters, in an imitation of Ossian, in the 5th No. For your Dactyls I am sorry you are so sore about 'em—a very Sir Fretful! In good troth, the Dactyls are good Dactyls, but their measure is naught. Be not yourself "half anger, half agony" if I pronounce your darling lines not to be the best you ever wrote—you have written much.

For the alterations in those lines, let 'em run thus:

I may not come a pilgrim, to the Banks
of *Avon, lucid stream*, to taste the wave (inspiring wave) was too common place.
which Shakspere drank, our British Helicon;
or with mine eye, &c., &c.
To muse, in tears, on that mysterious Youth, &c. (better than "drop a tear")

Then the last paragraph alter thus

Complaint begone, begone unkind reproof
Take up, my song, take up a merrier strain,
For yet again, & lo! from Avon's vales,
Another minstrel cometh! youth *endeared*,
God & good angels &c., as before.

better refer to my own "complaint" solely than half to that and half to Chatterton, as in your copy, which creates a confusion—"ominous fears" &c.

Have a care, good Master poet, of the Statute de Contumelia. What do you mean by calling Madame Mara harlot & naughty things? The goodness of the verse would not save you in a court of Justice. But are you really coming to town?

Coleridge, a gentleman called in London lately from Bristol, & inquired whether there were any of the family of a Mr. Chambers living—this Mr. Chambers he said had been the making of a friend's fortune who wished to make some return for it. He went

away without seeing her. Now, a Mrs. Reynolds, a very intimate friend of ours, whom you have seen at our house, is the only daughter, & all that survives, of Mr. Chambers—& a very little supply would be of service to her, for she married very unfortunately, & has parted with her husband. Pray find out this Mr. Pember (for that was the gentleman's friend's name), he is an attorney, & lives at Bristol. Find him out, & acquaint him with the circumstances of the case, & offer to be the medium of supply to Mrs. Reynolds, if he chuses to make her a present. She is in very distrest circumstances. Mr. Pember, attorney, Bristol—Mr. Chambers lived in the Temple. Mrs. Reynolds, his daughter, was my schoolmistress, & is in the room at this present writing. This last circumstance induced me to write so soon again—I have not further to add—Our loves to Sara. C. LAMB.

Thursday.

NOTE

[The passage at the beginning, before "Let us prose," together with the later passages in the same manner, refers to the poem in the preceding letter, which in slightly different form is printed in editions of Lamb as "Lines to Sara and Her Samuel." In order to complete the letter I have copied the version printed in the *Monthly Magazine*, January, 1797:—

LINES ADDRESSED, FROM LONDON, TO SARA AND S. T. C. AT BRISTOL, IN THE SUMMER OF 1796

Was it so hard a thing? I did but ask
A fleeting holiday, a little week.

What, if the jaded steer, who, all day long,
Had borne the heat and burthen of the plough,
When ev'ning came, and her sweet cooling hour,
Should seek to wander in a neighbour copse,
Where greener herbage wav'd, or clearer streams
Invited him to slake his burning thirst?
The man were crabbed who should say him nay;
The man were churlish who should drive him thence.

A blessing light upon your worthy heads,
Ye hospitable pair! I may not come
To catch, on Clifden's heights, the summer gale;
I may not come to taste the Avon wave;
Or, with mine eye intent on Redcliffe tow'rs,
To muse in tears on that mysterious youth,
Cruelly slighted, who, in evil hour,
Shap'd his advent'rous course to London walls!

Complaint, be gone! and, ominous thoughts, away!
Take up, my Song, take up a merrier strain;

For yet again, and lo! from Avon's vales,
Another Minstrel[1] cometh. Youth endear'd,
God and good Angels guide thee on thy road,
And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love!

Coleridge had just received a suggestion, through Dr. Beddoes of Bristol, that he should replace Grey, the late co-editor (with James Perry) of the *Morning Chronicle*. It came to nothing; but Coleridge had told Lamb and had asked him to look out a house in town for him.

"All deftly masqued like [as] hoar antiquity." From Coleridge's "Monody on Chatterton."

Dr. Kenrick's "Falstaff's Wedding," 1760, was a continuation of Shakespeare's "Henry IV."

We do not know what were the last lines that Lamb had sent to Coleridge. The lines to Cowper were printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for December, 1796.

Coleridge's *Poems* were reviewed in the *Monthly Review*, June, 1796, with no mention of Lamb. The *Critical Review* for the same month said of Lamb's effusions: "These are very beautiful."

Burger's "Leonora," which was to have such an influence upon English literature (it was the foundation of much of Sir Walter Scott's poetry), was translated from the German by William Taylor of Norwich in 1790 and printed in the *Monthly Magazine* in March, 1796. Scott at once made a rival version. The other fine song, in the April *Monthly Magazine*, was "The Lass of Fair Wone."

"Sir Fretful." Sir Fretful Plagiary in Sheridan's "Critic."

"Half anger, half agony." See the Dactyls, on page 34.

The mention of the Statute de Contumeliâ seems to refer to the "Lines Composed in a Concert-Room," which were first printed in the *Morning Post*, September 24, 1799, but must have been written earlier. Madame Mara (1749-1833) is not mentioned by name in the poem, but being one of the principal singers of the day Lamb probably fastened the epithet upon her by way of pleasantry; or she may have been referred to in the version of the lines which Lamb had seen.

The passage about Mr. Chambers is not now explicable; but we know that Mrs. Reynolds was Lamb's schoolmistress, probably when he was very small, and before he went to William Bird's Academy, and that in later life he allowed her a pension of £30 a year until her death.

Between this and the next letter came, in all probability, a number of letters to Coleridge which have been lost. It is incredible that Lamb kept silence, at this period, for eleven weeks.]

[1] "From vales where Avon winds, the Minstrel came." Coleridge's 'Monody on Chatterton.'

LETTER 8

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. September 27, 1796.]

MY dearest friend—White or some of my friends or the public papers by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines. My poor dear dearest sister in a fit of insanity has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a mad house, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses,—I eat and drink and sleep, and have my judgment I believe very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris of the Bluecoat school has been very very kind to us, and we have no other friend, but thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write,—as religious a letter as possible—but no mention of what is gone and done with.—With me "the former things are passed away," and I have something more to do that [than] to feel——

God almighty have us all in his keeping.——

C. LAMB.

Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

You [your] own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife.—You look after your family,—I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God almighty love you and all of us——

NOTE

[This letter tells its own story.

The following is the report of the inquest upon Mrs. Lamb which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* for September 26, 1796. The tragedy had occurred on Thursday, September 22:—

On Friday afternoon the Coroner and a respectable Jury sat on the body of a Lady in the neighbourhood of Holborn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter the preceding day. It appeared by the evidence adduced, that while the family were preparing for dinner, the young lady seized a case knife laying on

the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room; on the eager calls of her helpless infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and with loud shrieks approached her parent.

The child by her cries quickly brought up the landlord of the house, but too late—the dreadful scene presented to him the mother lifeless, pierced to the heart, on a chair, her daughter yet wildly standing over her with the fatal knife, and the venerable old man, her father, weeping by her side, himself bleeding at the forehead from the effects of a severe blow he received from one of the forks she had been madly hurling about the room.

For a few days prior to this the family had observed some symptoms of insanity in her, which had so much increased on the Wednesday evening, that her brother early the next morning went in quest of Dr. Pitcairn—had that gentleman been met with, the fatal catastrophe had, in all probability, been prevented.

It seems the young Lady had been once before, in her earlier years, deranged, from the harassing fatigues of too much business.—As her carriage towards her mother was ever affectionate in the extreme, it is believed that to the increased attentiveness, which her parents' infirmities called for by day and night, is to be attributed the present insanity of this ill-fated young woman.

It has been stated in some of the Morning Papers, that she has an insane brother also in confinement—this is without foundation.

The Jury of course brought in their Verdict, *Lunacy*.

In the *Whitehall Evening Post* the first part of the account is the same, but the end is as follows:—

The above unfortunate young person is a Miss Lamb, a mantua-maker, in Little Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. She has been, since, removed to Islington mad-house.

Mr. Norris of the Blue-Coat School has been confounded with Randal Norris of the Inner Temple, another friend of the Lambs, but is not, I think, the same.

"The former things . . ." See Revelation xxi. 4.

The reference to the poetry and Coleridge's publication of it shows that Lamb had already been invited to contribute to the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems*. The words "and never" in the original have a line through them which might mean erasure, but, I think, does not.

"Your own judgment . . ." Mrs. Coleridge had just become a mother: David Hartley Coleridge was born on September 19.

This was Coleridge's reply to Lamb's letter, as given in Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*:—

"[September 28, 1796.]

"Your letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupified my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter; I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms, like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith.

And surely it is a matter of joy, that your faith in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to 'his God and your God,' the God of mercies, and father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds, and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror, by the glories of God manifest, and the hallelujahs of angels.

"As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man, called by sorrow and anguish and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God; we cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ. And they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of his character, and bowed down and crushed under foot, cry in fulness of faith, 'Father, thy will be done.'

"I wish above measure to have you for a little while here—no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings—you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

"I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair—you are a temporary sharer in human miseries, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

"I remain, your affectionate,

"S. T. Coleridge."]

LETTER 9

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. October 3, 1796.]

MY dearest friend, your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear dearest sister,

the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments to our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind, and impressive (as it must be to the end of life) but temper'd with religious resignation, and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which in this early stage knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a Mother's murther. I have seen her. I found her this morning calm and serene, far very very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happend. Indeed from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind, and religious principle, to look forward to a time when *even she* might recover tranquillity. God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected, and calm; even on the dreadful day and in the midst of the terrible scene I preserved a tranquillity, which bystanders may have construed into indifference, a tranquillity not of despair; is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? I allow much to other favorable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret; on that first evening my Aunt was lying insensible, to all appearance like one dying,—my father, with his poor forehead plaisterd over from a wound he had received from a daughter dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly,—my mother a dead and murder'd corpse in the next room —yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest in things of sense, had endeavord after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the "ignorant present time," and this kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me, for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or 2 after the fatal ONE, we drest for dinner a tongue, which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down a feeling like remorse struck me,—this tongue poor Mary got for me, and can I partake of it now, when she is far away—a thought occurrd and relieved me,—if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs, I must rise above such weaknesses.—I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, tho', too far. On the very 2d day (I date from the day of horrors) as is usual in such cases there were a

matter of 20 people I do think supping in our room. They prevailed on me to eat *with them* (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry! in the room,—some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from Interest; I was going to partake with them, when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room, the very next room, a mother who thro' life wished nothing but her children's welfare—indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind in an agony of emotion,—I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquillity returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me, and I think it did me good.

I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice who was then in town was with me the first 3 or 4 first days, and was as a brother to me, gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humouring my poor father. Talk'd with him, read to him, play'd at cribbage with him (for so short is the old man's recollection, that he was playing at cards, as tho' nothing had happened, while the Coroner's Inquest was sitting over the way!) Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. Mr. Norris of Christ Hospital has been as a father to me, Mrs. Norris as a mother; tho' we had few claims on them. A Gentleman, brother to my Godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds,—and to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old Lady, a cousin of my father and Aunt's, a Gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my Aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days.

My Aunt is recover'd and as well as ever, and highly pleased at thoughts of going,—and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my Father for her board) wholely and solely to my Sister's use. Reckoning this we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid servant to look after him, when I am out, which will be necessary, £170 or £180 (rather) a year, out of which we can spare 50 or 60 at least for Mary, while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into an hospital. The good Lady of the mad house, and her daughter, an elegant sweet behaved young Lady, love her and are taken with her amasingly,

and I know from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as much.—Poor thing, they say she was but the other morning saying, she knew she must go to Bethlem for life; that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often as she passed Bedlam thought it likely "here it may be my fate to end my days—" conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head oftentimes, and mindful of more than one severe illness of that nature before. A Legacy of £100, which my father will have at Xmas, and this 20 I mentioned before, with what is in the house will much more than set us Clear;—if my father, an old servant maid, and I, can't live and live comfortably on £130 or £120 a year we ought to burn by slow fires, and I almost would, that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave one unfavourable impression on your mind respecting my Brother. Since this has happened he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind,—he has taken his ease in the world, and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way,—and I know his language is already, "Charles, you must take care of yourself, you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to," &c &c and in that style of talking. But you, a necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what *is amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good, but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father's monies in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The Lady at this mad house assures me that I may dismiss immediately both Doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally an opening draught or so for a while, and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to herself for £50 or guineas a year—the outside would be 60—You know by œconomy how much more, even, I shall be able to spare for her comforts.

She will, I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients, and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves dearly, and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the least tincture of selfishness—I will enlarge upon her qualities, poor dear dearest soul, in a future letter for my own comfort, for I understand her throughly; and if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found (I speak not with sufficient humility, I fear, but humanly and foolishly speaking) she

will be found, I trust, uniformly great and amiable; God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind.

LAMB.

Coleridge, continue to write; but do not for ever offend me by talking of sending me cash. Sincerely, and on my soul, we do not want it. God love you both!

I will write again very soon. Do you write directly.

These mentioned good fortunes and change of prospects had almost brought my mind over to the extreme the very opposite to Despair; I was in danger of making myself too happy; your letter brought me back to a view of things which I had entertained from the beginning; I hope (for Mary I can answer) but I hope that *I* shall thro' life never have less recollection nor a fainter impression of what has happened than I have now; 'tis not a light thing, nor meant by the Almighty to be received lightly. I must be serious, circumspect, and deeply religious thro' life; by such means may *both* of us escape madness in future, if it so please the Almighty.

Send me word, how it fares with Sara. I repeat it, your letter was and will be an inestimable treasure to me; you have a view of what my situation demands of me like my own view; and I trust a just one.

NOTE

[A word perhaps on Lamb's salary might be fitting here. For the first three years, from joining the East India House on April 5, 1792, he received nothing. This probationary period over, he was given £40 for the year 1795-1796. This, however, was raised to £70 in 1796 and there were means of adding to it a little, by extra work and by a small holiday grant. In 1797 it was £80, in 1799 £90, and from that time until 1814 it rose by £10 every second year.

"Ignorant present time" ("Macbeth," I., 5, 58).

Samuel Le Grice was the younger brother of Valentine Le Grice. Both were at Christ's Hospital with Lamb and Coleridge and are mentioned in the *Elia* essay on the school. Sam Le Grice afterwards had a commission in the 60th Foot, and died in Jamaica in 1802, as we shall see.

I have not the name of Lamb's godmother, nor of the old lady of fortune.]

LETTER 10

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. October 17, 1796.]

MY dearest friend, I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans of life veering about from this hope to the other, and settling no where. Is it an untoward fatality (speaking humanly) that does this for you, a stubborn irresistible concurrence of events? or lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune only to lay them down again, and your fortunes are an ignis fatuus that has been conducting you, in thought, from Lancaster Court, Strand, to somewhere near Matlock, then jumping across to Dr. Somebody's whose son's tutor you were likely to be, and would to God the dancing demon *may* conduct you at last in peace and comfort to the "life and labors of a cottager." You see from the above awkward playfulness of fancy, that my spirits are not quite depressed; I should ill deserve God's blessings, which since the late terrible event have come down in mercy upon us, if I indulged regret or querulousness,—Mary continues serene and chearful,—I have not by me a little letter she wrote to me, for, tho' I see her almost every day yet we delight to write to one another (for we can scarce see each other but in company with some of the people of the house), I have not the letter by me but will quote from memory what she wrote in it. "I have no bad terrifying dreams. At midnight when I happen to awake, the nurse sleeping by the side of me, with the noise of the poor mad people around me, I have no fear. The spirit of my mother seems to descend, and smile upon me, and bid me live to enjoy the life and reason which the Almighty has given me—I shall see her again in heaven; she will then understand me better; my Grandmother too will understand me better, and will then say no more, as she used to do, 'Polly, what are those poor crazy moyther'd brains of yours thinking of always?'"—Poor Mary, my Mother indeed *never understood* her right. She loved her, as she loved us all, with a Mother's love; but in opinion, in feeling, and sentiment, and disposition, bore so distant a resemblance to her daughter, that she never understood her right. Never could believe how much *she* loved her—but met her caresses, her protestations of filial affection, too frequently with coldness and repulse.—Still she was a good mother, God forbid I should think of her but *most* respectfully, *most* affectionately. Yet she would always love my brother above Mary, who was not

worthy of one tenth of that affection, which Mary had a right to claim. But it is my sister's gratifying recollection, that every act of duty and of love she could pay, every kindness (and I speak true, when I say to the hurting of her health, and, most probably, in great part to the derangement of her senses) thro' a long course of infirmities and sickness, she could shew her, SHE EVER DID. I will some day, as I promised, enlarge to you upon my Sister's excellencies; 'twill seem like exaggeration; but I will do it. At present short letters suit my state of mind best. So take my kindest wishes for your comfort and establishment in life, and for Sara's welfare and comforts with you. God love you; God love us all——

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[This letter is the only one in which Lamb speaks freely of his mother. He dwells on her memory in *Blank Verse*, 1798, but in later years he mentioned her in his writings only twice, in the *Elia* essays "New Year's Eve" and "My First Play," and then very indirectly: probably from the wish to spare his sister pain, although Talfourd tells us that Mary Lamb spoke of her mother often. Compare the poem on page 112.

In Letter 110, written by Mary Lamb to Sarah Stoddart (afterwards Mrs. William Hazlitt), printed on page 279, there is further light on Mrs. Lamb's want of sympathetic understanding of certain characters.

The references at the beginning are to Coleridge's idea of joining Perry on the *Morning Chronicle;* of teaching Mrs. Evans' children; of establishing a school at Derby, on the suggestion of Dr. Crompton; and finally of moving from Bristol to settle down in a cottage at Nether Stowey, and support himself by husbandry and literature.

"Life and labors of a cottager" sounds like Coleridge's own phrase (see note on page 86).]

LETTER 11

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 24th, 1796. [Monday.]

COLERIDGE, I feel myself much your debtor for that spirit of confidence and friendship which dictated your last letter. May your soul find peace at last in your cottage life! I only wish you were *but* settled. Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they give us both abundance of delight.

Especially they please us two, when you talk in a religious strain,—not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy, than consistent with the humility of genuine piety. To instance now in your last letter—you say, "it is by the press [*sic*], that God hath given finite spirits both evil and good (I suppose you mean *simply* bad men and good men), a portion as it were of His Omnipresence!" Now, high as the human intellect comparatively will soar, and wide as its influence, malign or salutary, can extend, is there not, Coleridge, a distance between the Divine Mind and it, which makes such language blasphemy? Again, in your first fine consolatory epistle you say, "you are a temporary sharer in human misery, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine Nature." What more than this do those men say, who are for exalting the man Christ Jesus into the second person of an unknown Trinity,—men, whom you or I scruple not to call idolaters? Man, full of imperfections, at best, and subject to wants which momentarily remind him of dependence; man, a weak and ignorant being, "servile" from his birth "to all the skiey influences," with eyes sometimes open to discern the right path, but a head generally too dizzy to pursue it; man, in the pride of speculation, forgetting his nature, and hailing in himself the future God, must make the angels laugh. Be not angry with me, Coleridge; I wish not to cavil; I know I cannot *instruct* you; I only wish to *remind* you of that humility which best becometh the Christian character. God, in the New Testament (*our best guide*), is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a *parent:* and in my poor mind 'tis best for us so to consider of Him, as our *heavenly* Father, and our *best Friend*, without indulging too bold conceptions of His nature. Let us learn to think humbly of ourselves, and rejoice in the appellation of "dear children," "brethren," and "co-heirs with Christ of the promises," seeking to know no further.

I am not insensible, indeed I am not, of the value of that first letter of yours, and I shall find reason to thank you for it again and again long after that blemish in it is forgotten. It will be a fine lesson of comfort to us, whenever we read it; and read it we often shall, Mary and I.

Accept our loves and best kind wishes for the welfare of yourself and wife, and little one. Nor let me forget to wish you joy on your birthday so lately past; I thought you had been older. My kind thanks and remembrances to Lloyd.

God love us all, and may He continue to be the father and the friend of the whole human race!

Sunday Evening. C. Lamb.

NOTE

[It is interesting to notice that with these letters Lamb suddenly assumes a gravity, independence and sense of authority that hitherto his correspondence has lacked. The responsibility of the household seems to have awakened his extraordinary common sense and fine understanding sense of justice. Previously he had ventured to criticise only Coleridge's literary exercises; he places his finger now on conduct too.

Coleridge's "last letter" has not been preserved; but the "first fine consolatory epistle" is printed on page 42.

"Servile . . . to all the skiey influences" ("Measure for Measure," III., 1, 9).

"Dear children . . . brethren . . . co-heirs with Christ of the promises . . ." A memory of Ephesians v. 1; Romans viii. 15-17; and Ephesians iii. 6.

This letter contains the first mention of Charles Lloyd (1775-1839), who was afterwards to be for a while so intimately associated with Lamb. Charles Lloyd was the son of a Quaker banker of Birmingham. He had published a volume of poems the year before and had met Coleridge when that magnetic visionary had visited Birmingham to solicit subscribers for *The Watchman* early in 1796. The proposition that Lloyd should live with Coleridge and become in a way his pupil was agreed to by his parents, and in September he accompanied the philosopher to Nether Stowey a day or so after David Hartley's birth, all eager to begin domestication and tutelage. Lloyd was a sensitive, delicate youth, with an acute power of analysis and considerable grasp of metaphysical ideas. No connection ever began more amiably. He was, I might add, by only two days Lamb's junior.]

LETTER 12

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 28th, 1796.

MY dear Friend, I am not ignorant that to be a partaker of the Divine Nature is a phrase to be met with in Scripture: I am only apprehensive, lest we in these latter days, tinctured (some of us perhaps pretty deeply) with mystical notions and the pride of metaphysics, might be apt to affix to such phrases a meaning, which the primitive users of them, the simple fishermen of Galilee for instance, never intended to convey. With

that other part of your apology I am not quite so well satisfied. You seem to me to have been straining your comparing faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike; the feeble narrow-sphered operations of the human intellect and the everywhere diffused mind of Deity, the peerless wisdom of Jehovah. Even the expression appears to me inaccurate—portion of omnipresence—omnipresence is an attribute whose very essence is unlimitedness. How can omnipresence be affirmed of anything in part? But enough of this spirit of disputatiousness. Let us attend to the proper business of human life, and talk a little together respecting our domestic concerns. Do you continue to make me acquainted with what you were doing, and how soon you are likely to be settled once for all.

I have satisfaction in being able to bid you rejoice with me in my sister's continued reason and composedness of mind. Let us both be thankful for it. I continue to visit her very frequently, and the people of the house are vastly indulgent to her; she is likely to be as comfortably situated in all respects as those who pay twice or thrice the sum. They love her, and she loves them, and makes herself very useful to them. Benevolence sets out on her journey with a good heart, and puts a good face on it, but is apt to limp and grow feeble, unless she calls in the aid of self-interest by way of crutch. In Mary's case, as far as respects those she is with, 'tis well that these principles are so likely to co-operate. I am rather at a loss sometimes for books for her,—our reading is somewhat confined, and we have nearly exhausted our London library. She has her hands too full of work to read much, but a little she must read; for reading was her daily bread.

Have you seen Bowles's new poem on "Hope?" What character does it bear? Has he exhausted his stores of tender plaintiveness? or is he the same in this last as in all his former pieces? The duties of the day call me off from this pleasant intercourse with my friend—so for the present adieu.

Now for the truant borrowing of a few minutes from business. Have you met with a new poem called the "Pursuits of Literature?" From the extracts in the "British Review" I judge it to be a very humorous thing; in particular I remember what I thought a very happy character of Dr. Darwin's poetry. Among all your quaint readings did you ever light upon Walton's "Complete Angler?" I asked you the question once before; it breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart; there are many choice old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every discordant angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it. Have you made it up with Southey yet? Surely one of you two must have been

a very silly fellow, and the other not much better, to fall out like boarding-school misses; kiss, shake hands, and make it up?

When will he be delivered of his new epic? *Madoc* I think, is to be the name of it; though that is a name not familiar to my ears. What progress do you make in your hymns? What Review are you connected with? If with any, why do you delay to notice White's book? You are justly offended at its profaneness; but surely you have undervalued its *wit*, or you would have been more loud in its praises. Do not you think that in *Slender's* death and madness there is most exquisite humour, mingled with tenderness, that is irresistible, truly Shakspearian? Be more full in your mention of it. Poor fellow, he has (very undeservedly) lost by it; nor do I see that it is likely ever to reimburse him the charge of printing, etc. Give it a lift, if you can. I suppose you know that Allen's wife is dead, and he, just situated as he was, never the better, as the worldly people say, for her death, her money with her children being taken off his hands. I am just now wondering whether you will ever come to town again, Coleridge; 'tis among the things I dare not hope, but can't help wishing. For myself, I can live in the midst of town luxury and superfluity, and not long for them, and I can't see why your children might not hereafter do the same. Remember, you are not in Arcadia when you are in the west of England, and they may catch infection from the world without visiting the metropolis. But you seem to have set your heart upon this same cottage plan; and God prosper you in the experiment! I am at a loss for more to write about; so 'tis as well that I am arrived at the bottom of my paper.

God love you, Coleridge!—Our best loves and tenderest wishes await on you, your Sara, and your little one.

C. L.

NOTE

[Bowles's poem was "Hope, an allegorical sketch on slowly recovering from sickness." See note on pages 79 and 80.

The Pursuits of Literature was a literary satire in the form of dialogues in verse, garnished with very outspoken notes, by Thomas James Mathias (1754?-1835), which appeared between 1794 and 1797.

Southey had returned from Portugal in the summer, when the quarrel between Coleridge and himself revived; but about the time of Hartley's birth some kind of a reconciliation was patched up. *Madoc*, as it happened, was not published until 1805, although in its first form it was completed in 1797.

"What Review are you connected with?" Writing to Charles Lloyd, sen., in December, 1796, Coleridge says that he gives his

evenings to his engagements with the *Critical Review* and *New Monthly Magazine.*

This is the passage in *Falstaff's Letters* describing Slender's death:—

DAVY TO SHALLOW

Master Abram is dead, gone, your Worship—dead! Master Abram! Oh! good your Worship, a's gone.—A' never throve, since a' came from Windsor—'twas his death. I call'd him a rebel, your Worship—but a' was all subject—a' was subject to any babe, as much as a King—a' turn'd, like as it were the latter end of a lover's lute—a' was all peace and resignment—a' took delight in nothing but his book of songs and sonnets—a' would go to the Stroud side under the large beech tree, and sing, till 'twas quite pity of our lives to mark him; for his chin grew as long as a muscle—Oh! a' sung his soul and body quite away—a' was lank as any greyhound, and had such a scent! I hid his love-songs among your Worship's law-books; for I thought if a' could not get at them, it might be to his quiet; but a' snuff'd 'em out in a moment.—Good your Worship, have the wise woman of Brentford secured—Master Abram may have been conjured—Peter Simple says, a' never look'd up, after a' sent to the wise woman—Marry, a' was always given to look down afore his elders; a' might do it, a' was given to it—your Worship knows it; but then 'twas peak and pert with him—a' was a man again, marry, in the turn of his heel.—A' died, your Worship, just about one, at the crow of the cock.—I thought how it was with him; for a' talk'd as quick, aye, marry, as glib as your Worship; and a' smiled, and look'd at his own nose, and call'd "Sweet Ann Page." I ask'd him if a' would eat—so a' bad us commend him to his Cousin Robert (a' never call'd your Worship so before) and bade us get hot meat, for a' would not say nay to Ann again.[1]—But a' never liv'd to touch it—a' began all in a moment to sing "Lovers all, a Madrigal." 'Twas the only song Master Abram ever learnt out of book, and clean by heart, your Worship—and so a' sung, and smiled, and look'd askew at his own nose, and sung, and sung on, till his breath waxed shorter, and shorter, and shorter, and a' fell into a struggle and died. I beseech your Worship to think he was well tended—I look'd to him, your Worship, late and soon, and crept at his heel all day long, an it had been any fallow dog—but I thought a' could never live, for a' did so sing, and then a' never drank with it—I knew 'twas a bad sign—yea, a' sung, your Worship, marry, without drinking a drop.]

LETTER 13

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 8th, 1796.

MY Brother, my Friend,—I am distrest for you, believe me I am; not so much for your painful, troublesome complaint, which, I trust, is only for a time, as for those anxieties which brought it on, and perhaps even now may be nursing its malignity. Tell me, dearest of my friends, is your mind at peace, or has anything, yet unknown to me, happened to give you fresh disquiet, and steal from you all the pleasant dreams of future rest? Are you still (I

[1] [Vide "Merry Wives of Windsor." Latter part of the 1st Scene, 1st Act.]

fear you are) far from being comfortably settled? Would to God it were in my power to contribute towards the bringing of you into the haven where you would be! But you are too well skilled in the philosophy of consolation to need my humble tribute of advice; in pain and in sickness, and in all manner of disappointments, I trust you have that within you which shall speak peace to your mind. Make it, I entreat you, one of your puny comforts, that I feel for you, and share all your griefs with you. I feel as if I were troubling you about *little* things; now I am going to resume the subject of our last two letters, but it may divert us both from unpleasanter feelings to make such matters, in a manner, of importance. Without further apology, then, it was not that I did not relish, that I did not in my heart thank you for, those little pictures of your feelings which you lately sent me, if I neglected to mention them. You may remember you had said much the same things before to me on the same subject in a former letter, and I considered those last verses as only the identical thoughts better clothed; either way (in prose or verse) such poetry must be welcome to me. I love them as I love the Confessions of Rousseau, and for the same reason: the same frankness, the same openness of heart, the same disclosure of all the most hidden and delicate affections of the mind: they make me proud to be thus esteemed worthy of the place of friend-confessor, brother-confessor, to a man like Coleridge. This last is, I acknowledge, language too high for friendship; but it is also, I declare, too sincere for flattery. Now, to put on stilts, and talk magnificently about trifles—I condescend, then, to your counsel, Coleridge, and allow my first Sonnet (sick to death am I to make mention of my sonnets, and I blush to be so taken up with them, indeed I do)—I allow it to run thus, "*Fairy Land*," &c. &c., as I [? you] last wrote it.

The Fragments I now send you I want printed to get rid of 'em; for, while they stick burr-like to my memory, they tempt me to go on with the idle trade of versifying, which I long—most sincerely I speak it—I long to leave off, for it is unprofitable to my soul; I feel it is; and these questions about words, and debates about alterations, take me off, I am conscious, from the properer business of *my* life. Take my sonnets once for all, and do not propose any re-amendments, or mention them again in any shape to me, I charge you. I blush that my mind can consider them as things of any worth. And pray admit or reject these fragments, as you like or dislike them, without ceremony. Call 'em Sketches, Fragments, or what you will, but do not entitle any of my *things* Love Sonnets, as I told you to call 'em; 'twill only make me look little in my own eyes; for it is a passion of which I retain *nothing;* 'twas a weakness, concerning which I may say, in the words of Petrarch (whose life is

now open before me), "if it drew me out of some vices, it also prevented the growth of many virtues, filling me with the love of the creature rather than the Creator, which is the death of the soul." Thank God, the folly has left me for ever; not even a review of my love verses renews one wayward wish in me; and if I am at all solicitous to trim 'em out in their best apparel, it is because they are to make their appearance in good company. Now to my fragments. Lest you have lost my Grandame, she shall be one. 'Tis among the few verses I ever wrote (that to Mary is another) which profit me in the recollection. God love her,—and may we two never love each other less!

These, Coleridge, are the few sketches I have thought worth preserving; how will they relish thus detached? Will you reject all or any of them? They are thine: do whatsoever thou listest with them. My eyes ache with writing long and late, and I wax wondrous sleepy; God bless you and yours, me and mine! Good night.

C. Lamb.

I will keep my eyes open reluctantly a minute longer to tell you, that I love you for those simple, tender, heart-flowing lines with which you conclude your last, and in my eyes best, sonnet (so you call 'em),

> "So, for the mother's sake, the child was dear,
> And dearer was the mother for the child."

Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge, or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness; for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart, and carries into daylight its own modest buds and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hot-beds in the gardens of Parnassus. I am unwilling to go to bed, and leave my sheet unfilled (a good piece of night-work for an idle body like me), so will finish with begging you to send me the earliest account of your complaint, its progress, or (as I hope to God you will be able to send me) the tale of your recovery, or at least amendment. My tenderest remembrances to your Sara.——

Ones more good night.

Note

[Coleridge, on November 2, had begun to suffer from his lifelong enemy, neuralgia, the result largely of worry concerning his future, so many of his projects having broken down. He was subduing it with laudanum—the beginning of that fatal habit.

"The haven where you would be." See Psalms cvii. 30.

We do not know what were the verses which Coleridge had sent Lamb, possibly the three sonnets on the birth of Hartley, the third of which is referred to below.

Lamb's decision in September to say or hear no more of his own poetry here breaks down. The reference to the Fairy Land sonnet is only partially explained by the parallel version which I printed on page 24; for "Fairy Land" was Coleridge's version. Either Lamb had made a new version, substituting "Fairy Land" for "Faery," or he wrote, "I allow it to run thus: Fairy Land, &c., &c., as *you* last wrote it." When reprinted, however, it ran as Lamb originally wished. The other fragments were those afterwards included in Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition, 1797.

"Love Sonnets." Lamb changed his mind again on this subject (see page 58) and yet again.

I have not found the particular Life of Petrarch from which Lamb quotes.

Coleridge's last of the three sonnets on the birth of Hartley was entitled "Sonnet to a Friend [Charles Lloyd] who asked how I felt when the Nurse first presented my Infant to me." It closed with the lines which Lamb copies.]

LETTER 14

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 14th, 1796.

COLERIDGE, I love you for dedicating your poetry to Bowles. Genius of the sacred fountain of tears, it was he who led you gently by the hand through all this valley of weeping, showed you the dark green yew trees and the willow shades where, by the fall of waters, you might indulge an uncomplaining melancholy, a delicious regret for the past, or weave fine visions of that awful future,

> "When all the vanities of life's brief day
> Oblivion's hurrying hand hath swept away,
> And all its sorrows, at the awful blast
> Of the archangel's trump, are but as shadows past."

I have another sort of dedication in my head for my few things, which I want to know if you approve of, and can insert. I mean to inscribe them to my sister. It will be unexpected, and it will give her pleasure; or do you think it will look whimsical at all? As I have not spoke to her about it, I can easily reject the idea. But there is a monotony in the affections, which people living together or, as we do now, very frequently seeing each other, are apt to give in to: a sort of indifference in the expression of kindness for each

other, which demands that we should sometimes call to our aid the trickery of surprise. Do you publish with Lloyd or without him? in either case my little portion may come last, and after the fashion of orders to a country correspondent I will give directions how I should like to have 'em done. The title-page to stand thus:—

POEMS,

CHIEFLY LOVE SONNETS

BY

CHARLES LAMB, OF THE INDIA HOUSE.

Under this title the following motto, which, for want of room, I put over leaf, and desire you to insert, whether you like it or no. May not a gentleman choose what arms, mottoes, or armorial bearings the herald will give him leave, without consulting his republican friend, who might advise none? May not a publican put up the sign of the Saracen's Head, even though his undiscerning neighbour should prefer, as more genteel, the Cat and Gridiron?

(MOTTO.)

"This beauty, in the blossom of my youth,
When my first fire knew no adulterate incense,
Nor I no way to flatter but my fondness,
In the best language my true tongue could tell me,
And all the broken sighs my sick heart lend me,
I sued and served. Long did I love this lady."

MASSINGER.

THE DEDICATION.

THE FEW FOLLOWING POEMS,
CREATURES OF THE FANCY AND THE FEELING
IN LIFE'S MORE VACANT HOURS,
PRODUCED, FOR THE MOST PART, BY
LOVE IN IDLENESS,
ARE,
WITH ALL A BROTHER'S FONDNESS,
INSCRIBED TO
MARY ANN LAMB,
THE AUTHOR'S BEST FRIEND AND SISTER.

This is the pomp and paraphernalia of parting, with which I take my leave of a passion which has reigned so royally (so long) within me; thus, with its trappings of laureatship, I fling it off, pleased and satisfied with myself that the weakness troubles me no longer. I am wedded, Coleridge, to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father. Oh! my friend, I think sometimes, could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? not those "merrier days," not the "pleasant days of hope," not "those wanderings with a fair hair'd maid," which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days, Coleridge, of a *mother's* fondness for her *school-boy*. What would I give to call her back to earth for *one* day, on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper which, from time to time, have given her gentle spirit pain; and the day, my friend, I trust will come; there will be "time enough" for kind offices of love, if "Heaven's eternal year" be ours. Hereafter, her meek spirit shall not reproach me. Oh, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings! and let no man think himself released from the kind "charities" of relationship: these shall give him peace at the last; these are the best foundation for every species of benevolence. I rejoice to hear, by certain channels, that you, my friend, are reconciled with all your relations. 'Tis the most kindly and natural species of love, and we have all the associated train of early feelings to secure its strength and perpetuity. Send me an account of your health; *indeed* I am solicitous about you. God love you and yours.

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[It seems to have been Coleridge's intention to dedicate the second edition of his *Poems* to Bowles; but he changed his mind and dedicated it to his brother, the Rev. George Coleridge. A sonnet to Bowles was included in the volume, a kind of sub-dedication of the other sonnets, but it had appeared also in the 1796 volume.

Lamb's instructions concerning his share in the 1797 volume were carried out, except that the sub-title (which I supply from an old interleaved edition of Talfourd in my possession) was omitted. For the passage from Massinger see note on page 31.

"When all the vanities of life's brief day . . ." This is a composite quotation. The first couplet, slightly altered, is from Bowles' "On Mr. Howard's Account of Lazarettos," and the second from a companion poem, "The Grave of Howard."

The quotations "merrier days" ("happier days") and "wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid" are from Lamb's own sonnets. I do not find "pleasant days of hope."

"Time enough . . . Heaven's eternal year." From Dryden's "Elegy on Mrs. Killigrew," lines 14 and 15:—

> Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
> Since Heaven's eternal year is thine.

"Charities . . ." Possibly from Cowper's *Task*, "Winter Evening," line 677:—

> The charities of domestic life.

Coleridge had paid in the summer a long-deferred visit of reconciliation to his family at Ottery St. Mary.]

LETTER 15

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. December 2, 1796 (Friday).]

I HAVE delay'd writing thus long, not having by me my copy of your poems, which I had lent. I am not satisfied with all your intended omissions. Why omit 40: 68: 84: above all, let me protest strongly against your rejecting the "Complaint of Ninathoma," 86. The words, I acknowledge, are Ossian's, but you have added to them the "Music of Caril." If a vicarious substitute be wanting, sacrifice (and 'twill be a piece of self-denial *too*) the Epitaph on an Infant, of which its Author seems so proud, so tenacious. Or, if your heart be set on *perpetuating* the four-line-wonder, I'll tell you what [to] do: sell the copywright of it at once to a country statuary; commence in this manner Death's prime poet laureat; and let your verses be adopted in every village round instead of those hitherto famous ones "Afflictions sore long time I bore, Physicians were in vain". I have seen your last very beautiful poem in the Monthly Magazine—write thus, and you most generally have written thus, and I shall never quarrel with you about simplicity. With regard to my lines "Laugh all that weep," etc.—I would willingly sacrifice them, but my portion of the volume is so ridiculously little, that in honest truth I can't spare them. As things are, I have very slight pretensions to participate in the title-page.—White's book is at length reviewed in the Monthly; was it your doing, or Dyer's to whom I sent him? Or rather do you not write in the Critical? for I observed, in an Article of this Month's a line quoted out of *that* sonnet on Mrs. Siddons "with eager wond'ring and perturb'd delight"—and a line from *that* sonnet would not readily have occurred to a stranger.

That sonnet, Coleridge, brings afresh to my mind the time when you wrote those on Bowles, Priestly, Burke—'twas 2 Christmases ago, and in that nice little smoky room at the Salutation, which is even now continually presenting itself to my recollection, with all its associated train of pipes, tobacco, Egghot, welch Rabbits, metaphysics and Poetry.

Are we NEVER to meet again? How differently I am circumstanced now—I have never met with any one, never shall meet with any one, who could or can compensate me for the loss of your society—I have no one to talk all these matters about to —I lack friends, I lack books to supply their absence. But these complaints ill become me: let me compare my present situation, prospects, and state of mind, with what they were but 2 months back—*but* 2 months. O my friend, I am in danger of forgetting the awful lessons then presented to me—remind me of them; remind me of my Duty. Talk seriously with me when you do write. I thank you, from my heart I thank you, for your sollicitude about my Sister. She is quite well,—but must not, I fear, come to live with us yet a good while. In the first place, because at present it would hurt her, and hurt my father, for them to be together: secondly from a regard to the world's good report, for I fear, I fear, tongues will be busy *whenever* that event takes place. Some have hinted, one man has prest it on me, that she should be in perpetual confinement—what she hath done to deserve, or the necessity of such an hardship, I see not; do you? I am starving at the India house, near 7 o'clock without my dinner, and so it has been and will be almost all the week. I get home at night o'erwearied, quite faint,—and then to CARDS with my father, who will not let me enjoy a meal in peace—but I must conform to my situation, and I hope I am, for the most part, not unthankful.

I am got home at last, and, after repeated games at Cribbage have got my father's leave to write awhile: with difficulty got it, for when I expostulated about playing any more, he very aptly replied, "If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all." The argument was unanswerable, and I set to afresh.

I told you, I do not approve of your omissions. Neither do I quite coincide with you in your arrangements: I have not time to point out a better, and I suppose some self-associations of your own have determined their place as they now stand. Your beginning indeed with the Joan of Arc lines I coincide entirely with: I love a splendid Outset, a magnificent Portico; and the Diapason is Grand—the Religious Musings—when I read them, I think how poor, how unelevated, unoriginal, my blank verse is, "Laugh all that weep" especially, where the subject demanded a grandeur of conception: and I ask what business they have among yours—but

Friendship covereth a multitude of defects. Why omit 73? At all events, let me plead for those former pages,—40. 63. 84. 86. I should like, for old acquaintance sake, to spare 62. 119 would have made a figure among *Shenstone's* Elegies: *you* may admit it or reject, as you please. In the Man of Ross let the old line stand as it used: "wine-cheer'd moments" much better than the lame present one. 94, change the harsh word "foodful" into "dulcet" or, if not too harsh, "nourishing." 91, "moveless": is that as good as "moping"?—8, would it not read better omitting those 2 lines last but 6 about Inspiration? I want some loppings made in the Chatterton; it wants but a little to make it rank among the finest irregular Lyrics I ever read. Have you time and inclination to go to work upon it—or is it too late—or do you think it needs none? Don't reject those verses in one of your Watchmen—"Dear native brook," &c.—nor, I think, those last lines you sent me, in which "all effortless" is without doubt to be preferred to "inactive." If I am writing more than ordinarily dully, 'tis that I am stupified with a tooth-ache. 37, would not the concluding lines of the 1st paragraph be well omitted—& it go on "*So* to sad sympathies" &c.? In 40, if you retain it, "wove" the learned Toil is better than "urge," which spoils the personification. Hang it, do not omit 48. 52. 53. What you do retain tho', call sonnets for God's sake, and not effusions,—spite of your ingenious anticipation of ridicule in your Preface. The last 5 lines of 50 are too good to be lost, the rest is not much worth. My tooth becomes importunate—I must finish. Pray, pray, write to me: if you knew with what an anxiety of joy I open such a long packet as you last sent me, you would not grudge giving a few minutes now and then to this intercourse (the only intercourse, I fear we two shall ever have), this conversation, with your friend—such I boast to be called.

God love you and yours.

Write to me when you move, lest I direct wrong.

Has Sara no poems to publish? Those lines 129 are probably too light for the volume where the Religious Musings are—but I remember some very beautiful lines addrest by somebody at Bristol to somebody at London.

God bless you once more. C. Lamb.

Thursday Night.

Note

[This letter refers to the preparation of Coleridge's second edition of his *Poems*. "Why omit 40, 63, 84?"—these were "Absence," "To the Autumnal Moon" and the imitation from Ossian.

The "Music of Caril." Carril was the bard of Cuhullin (see Ossian's Fingal).

The "Epitaph on an Infant" ran thus:—

Ere Sin could blight, or Sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to Heaven conveyed
And bade it blossom there.

Lamb applied the first two lines to a sucking pig in his *Elia* essay on "Roast Pig" many years later. The old epitaph runs:—

Afflictions sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain;
Till Heaven did please my woes to ease,
And take away my pain.

Coleridge's very beautiful poem in the *Monthly Magazine* (for October) was "Reflections on Entering into Active Life," beginning, "Low was our pretty cot."

Lamb's lines, "Laugh all that weep," I cannot find. We learn later that they were in blank verse.

Falstaff's Letters was reviewed in the *Monthly Review* for November, 1796, very favourably. The article was quite possibly by Coleridge.

The sonnet on Mrs. Siddons was written by Lamb and Coleridge together when Coleridge was in London at the end of 1794, and it formed one of a series of sonnets on eminent persons printed in the *Morning Chronicle*, of which those on Bowles, Priestley and Burke were others. The quotation from it was in an article in the November *Critical Review* on the "Musæ Etonenses."

"One man has prest it on me." There is reason to suppose that this was John Lamb, the brother.

As it happened Coleridge did not begin his second edition with the "Joan of Arc" lines, but with the "Ode to the New Year." The "Religious Musings" brought Coleridge's part of the volume to a close.

The poem on page 73 was "In the Manner of Spenser." The poems on pages 40, 63, 84, we know; that on page 86 was "The Complaint of Ninathoma." "To Genevieve" was on page 62. That on page 119 was "To a Friend in Answer to a Melancholy Letter." Coleridge never restored the phrase "wine-cheer'd moments" to "The Man of Ross." He did not change "foodful" to "dulcet" in "To an Infant." He did not alter "moveless" to "moping" in "The Young Ass." He left the Inspiration passage as it was in the "Monody on Chatterton." Not that he disregarded all Lamb's advice, as a comparison of the 1796 and 1797 editions of the *Poems* will show.

The poem "Dear native brook" was the sonnet "To the River Otter." Coleridge took Lamb's counsel. The poem containing

the phrase "all effortless" was that "Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune" (Charles Lloyd). Coleridge did not include it. The poem on page 37 was "To a Young Lady with a Poem on the French Revolution." Nos. 48, 52 and 53 were the sonnets to Priestley, Kosciusko and Fayette. The last five lines of 50 were in the sonnet to Sheridan. The lines on page 129 were Sara's verses "The Silver Thimble." None of these were reprinted in 1797. The beautiful lines addressed from somebody at Bristol to somebody at London were those from Sara Coleridge to Lamb, referred to on page 33. Coleridge persisted in the use of the word "effusion".]

LETTER 16

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Dated at end: Dec. 5, 1796.]

To a young Lady going out to India

HARD is the heart, that does not melt with Ruth
When care sits cloudy on the brow of Youth,
When bitter griefs the *female* bosom swell
And Beauty meditates a fond farewell
To her loved native land, and early home,
In search of peace thro' "stranger climes to roam."[1]

The Muse, with glance prophetic, sees her stand,
Forsaken, silent Lady, on the strand
Of farthest India, sickening at the war
Of waves slow-beating, dull upon the shore
Stretching, at gloomy intervals, her eye
O'er the wide waters vainly to espy
The long-expected bark, in which to find
Some tidings of a world she has left behind.

In that sad hour shall start the gushing tear
For scenes her childhood loved, now doubly dear,
In that sad hour shall frantic memory awake
Pangs of remorse for slighted England's sake,
And for the sake of many a tender tye
Of Love or Friendship pass'd too lightly by.
Unwept, unpitied, midst an alien race,
And the cold looks of many a stranger face,
How will her poor heart bleed, and chide the day,
That from her country took her far away.

[*Lamb has struck his pen through the foregoing poem.*]

[1] Bowles. ["The African," line 27.]

Coleridge, the above has some few decent [lines in] it, and in the paucity of my portion of your volume may as well be inserted; I would also wish to retain the following if only to perpetuate the memory of so exquisite a pleasure as I have often received at the performance of the tragedy of Douglas, when Mrs. Siddons has been the Lady Randolph. Both pieces may be inserted between the sonnets and the sketches—in which latter, the last leaf but one of them, I beg you to alter the words "pain and want" to "pain and grief," this last being a more familiar and ear-satisfying combination. Do it I beg of you. To understand the following, if you are not acquainted with the play, you should know that on the death of Douglas his mother threw herself down a rock; and that at that time Scotland was busy in repelling the Danes.

THE TOMB OF DOUGLAS

See the Tragedy of that name

When her son, her Douglas died,
To the steep rock's fearful side
Fast the frantic mother hied.

O'er her blooming warrior dead
Many a tear did Scotland shed,
And shrieks of long and loud lament
From her Grampian hills she sent.

Like one awakening from a trance,
She met the shock of Lochlin's lance. Denmark
On her rude invader foe
Return'd an hundred fold the blow.
Drove the taunting spoiler home:
Mournful thence she took her way
To do observance at the tomb,
Where the son of Douglas [lay].

Round about the tomb did go
In solemn state and order slow,
Silent pace, and black attire,
Earl, or Knight, or good Esquire,
Who e'er by deeds of valour done
In battle had high honors won;
Whoe'er in their pure veins could trace
The blood of Douglas' noble race.

With them the flower of minstrels came,
And to their cunning harps did frame
In doleful numbers piercing rhimes,
Such strains as in the olden times
Had soothed the spirit of Fingal
Echoing thro' his fathers' Hall.

"Scottish maidens, drop a tear
O'er the beauteous Hero's bier.
Brave youth and comely 'bove compare;
All golden shone his burnish'd hair;

Valor and smiling courtesy
Played in the sunbeams of his eye.
Closed are those eyes that shone so fair
And stain'd with blood his yellow hair.
Scottish maidens drop a tear
O'er the beauteous Hero's bier."

"Not a tear, I charge you, shed
For the false Glenalvon dead;
Unpitied let Glenalvon lie,
Foul stain to arms and chivalry."

"Behind his back the traitor came,
And Douglas died without his fame."

[*Lamb has struck his pen through the lines against which I have put an asterisk.*]

* "Scottish maidens, drop a tear,
* O'er the beauteous hero's bier."

* "Bending warrior, o'er thy grave,
Young light of Scotland early spent!
Thy country thee shall long lament,
* *Douglas 'Beautiful and Brave'!*
And oft to after times shall tell,
In Hope's sweet prime my Hero fell."

Is "*morbid* wantonness of woe" a good and allowable phrase?

[*Lamb has struck his pen through the remainder.*]

"Thane or Lordling, think no scorn
Of the poor and lowly-born.
In brake obscure or lonely dell
The simple flowret prospers well;
The *gentler* virtues cottage-bred, omitted
Thrive best beneath the humble shed.
Low-born Hinds, opprest, obscure,
Ye who patiently endure
To bend the knee and bow the head,
And thankful eat *another's bread*
Well may ye mourn your best friend dead,
Till Life with Grief together end:
He would have been the poor man's friend."

"Bending, warrior, o'er thy grave,
Young light of Scotland early spent! omitted
Thy country thee shall long lament,
Douglas, '*Beautiful and Brave*'!
And oft to after times shall tell, omitted
In life's young prime my Hero fell."

At length I have done with verse making. Not that I relish other people's poetry less,—theirs comes from 'em without effort, mine is the difficult operation of a brain scanty of ideas, made more difficult by disuse. I have been reading the "Task" with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton, but I would not call that man my friend, who should be offended with the "divine chit-chat of Cowper." Write to me.—God love you and yours,

C. L.

NOTE

[The name of the young lady going out to India is not known; the verses were printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for March, 1797, but not in Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797. "The Tomb of Douglas" was included in that volume. The poem in which the alteration "pain and want" was to be made (but was not made, or was made and cancelled later) was "Fancy Employed on Divine Subjects."

The "divine chit-chat of Cowper" was Coleridge's own phrase. It is a pretty circumstance that Lamb and Cowper now share a memorial in Edmonton church.]

LETTER 17

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Little Queen Street, Night of Dec. 9th,] 1796.

I AM sorry I cannot now relish your poetical present as thoroughly as I feel it deserves; but I do not the less thank Lloyd and you for it.

In truth, Coleridge, I am perplexed, & at times almost cast down. I am beset with perplexities. The old hag of a wealthy relation, who took my aunt off our hands in the beginning of trouble, has found out that she is "indolent and mulish"—I quote her own words—and that her attachment to us is so strong that she can never be happy apart. The Lady, with delicate Irony, remarks that, if I am not an Hypocrite, I shall rejoyce to receive her again; and that it will be a means of making me more fond of home to have so dear a friend to come home to! The fact is, she is jealous of my aunt's bestowing any kind recollections on us, while she enjoys the patronage of her roof. She says she finds it inconsistent with her own "ease and tranquility" to keep her any longer, & in fine summons me to fetch her home. Now, much as I should rejoyce to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitend we are already, how unable already to answer any demand which sickness or any extraordinary expence may make. I know this, and all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities I am somewhat nonplusd, to say no worse. This prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness and yours have furnished me with. I thank you tho from my heart, and feel myself not quite alone in the earth.

Before I offer, what alone I have to offer, a few obvious remarks on the poems you sent me, I can[not] but notice the odd coincidence of two young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers. Love—what L[loyd] calls "the feverish and romantic tye"—hath too long domineerd over all the charities of home: the dear domestic tyes of father, brother, husband. The amiable and benevolent Cowper has a beautiful passage in his "Task,"—some natural and painful reflections on his deceased parents: and Hayley's sweet lines to his mother are notoriously the best things he ever wrote. Cowper's lines, some of them, are—

> "How gladly would the man recall to life
> The boy's neglected sire; a mother, too,
> That softer name, perhaps more gladly still,
> Might he demand them at the gates of death."

I cannot but smile to see my Granny so gayly deck'd forth: tho', I think, whoever altered "thy" praises to "her" praises, "thy" honoured memory to "her" honoured memory, did wrong—they best exprest my feelings. There is a pensive state of recollection, in which the mind is disposed to apostrophise the departed objects of its attachment, and, breaking loose from grammatical precision, changes from the 1st to the 3rd, and from the 3rd to the 1st person, just as the random fancy or the feeling directs. Among Lloyd's sonnets, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th, are eminently beautiful. I think him too lavish of his expletives; the *do's* and *did's*, when they occur too often, bring a quaintness with them along with their simplicity, or rather air of antiquity which the patrons of them seem desirous of conveying.

The lines on Friday are very pleasing—"Yet calls itself in pride of Infancy woman or man," &c., "affection's tottering troop"—are prominent beauties. Another time, when my mind were more at ease, I could be more particular in my remarks, and I would postpone them now, only I want some diversion of mind. The *Melancholy Man* is a charming piece of poetry, only the "whys" (with submission) are too many. Yet the questions are too good to be any of 'em omitted. For those lines of yours, page 18, omitted in magazine, I think the 3 first better retain'd—the 3 last, which are somewhat simple in the most affronting sense of the word, better omitted: to this my taste directs me—I have no claim to prescribe to you. "Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies" is an exquisite line, but you knew *that* when you wrote 'em, and I trifle in pointing such out. Tis altogether the sweetest thing to me you ever wrote—tis all honey. "No wish profaned my overwhelmed heart, Blest hour, it was a Luxury to be"—I recognise feelings, which I may taste again, if tranquility has not taken

his flight for ever, and I will not believe but I shall be happy, very happy again. The next poem to your friend is very beautiful: need I instance the pretty fancy of "the rock's collected tears"—or that original line "pour'd all its healthful greenness on the soul"? —let it be, since you asked me, "as neighbouring fountains each reflect the whole"—tho' that is somewhat harsh; indeed the ending is not so finish'd as the rest, which if you omit in your forthcoming edition, you will do the volume wrong, and the very binding will cry out. Neither shall you omit the 2 following poems. "The hour when we shall meet again," is fine fancy, tis true, but fancy catering in the Service of the feeling—fetching from her stores most splendid banquets to satisfy her. Do not, do not omit it. Your sonnet to the *River Otter* excludes those equally beautiful lines, which deserve not to be lost, "as the tired savage," &c., and I prefer that copy in your *Watchman*. I plead for its preference.

Another time, I may notice more particularly Lloyd's, Southey's, Dermody's Sonnets. I shrink from them now: my teazing lot makes me too confused for a clear judgment of things, too selfish for sympathy; and these ill-digested, meaningless remarks I have imposed on myself as a task, to lull reflection, as well as to show you I did not neglect reading your valuable present. Return my acknowledgments to Lloyd; you two appear to be about realising an Elysium upon earth, and, no doubt, I shall be happier. Take my best wishes. Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. C., and give little David Hartley—God bless its little heart!—a kiss for me. Bring him up to know the meaning of his Christian name, and what that name (imposed upon him) will demand of him.

C. Lamb.

God love you!

I write, for one thing, to say that I shall write no more till you send me word where you are, for you are so soon to move.

My sister is pretty well, thank God. We think of you very often. God bless you: continue to be my correspondent, and I will strive to fancy that this world is *not* "all barrenness."

Note

[The poetical present, Mr. Dykes Campbell pointed out in *The Athenæum*, June 13, 1891, consisted of Lloyd's *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer*, to which Lamb had contributed "The Grandame," and of a little privately-printed collection of poems by Coleridge and Lloyd, which they had intended to publish, but did not. The pamphlet has completely vanished. In addition to these two works the poetical present also comprised another privately-printed collection, a little pamphlet of twenty-

eight sonnets which Coleridge had arranged for the purpose of binding up with those of Bowles. It included three of Bowles', four of Coleridge's, four of Lamb's, four of Southey's, and the remainder by Dermody, Lloyd, Charlotte Smith, and others. A copy of this pamphlet is preserved in the South Kensington Museum.

"The poems you sent me." This would be Lloyd's *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer*. When Lamb reprinted "The Grandame" in Coleridge's second edition, 1797, he put back the original text.

Lloyd called Love "the fev'rish and romantic tie" in the first sonnet on the death of Priscilla Farmer.

The lines in *The Task* are in the "Winter Walk at Noon," 42-45.

Lloyd's 6th sonnet begins:—

> When Thou that agonized Saint dost see,

the 7th—

> Oft when I brood on what my heart has felt,

the 8th—

> My Bible, scarcely dare I open thee!

the 9th—

> When from my dreary home I first mov'd on,

and the 11th—

> As o'er the dying embers oft I cower.

In Lloyd's part of the 1797 edition of Coleridge's *Poems* these sonnets are re-numbered V., VI., VII., VIII. and X.

The lines on Friday bore the title "Lines written on a Friday, the Day in each Week formerly devoted by the Author and his Brothers and Sisters to the Society of their Grandmother." The passage which Lamb singled out runs thus:—

> . . . Faint-heard the rumbling wheels
> Proclaim the kind conveyance sent by her,
> The watchful Friend, to bear the feeble ones:
> Perchance some babe that still in helplessness
> Clings to its Mother's breast, or one that left
> But now its Nurse's lap, another yet
> That scarcely lisps its benefactress' name,
> Yet calls itself in pride of infancy,
> Woman or Man! Ah, enviable state,
> When in simplicity of heart we're pleas'd
> With misery-meaning names! The mother still
> With kisses fond, or smiles of anxious hope
> Tended affection's tott'ring troop. . . .

I now take up Mr. Dykes Campbell's comments on the letter, where it branches off from the *Priscilla Farmer* volume to the vanished pamphlet of poems by Coleridge and Lloyd:—

Beginning with Lloyd's "Melancholy Man" (first printed in the Carlisle volume of 1795), he [Lamb] passes to Coleridge's poem on leaving the honeymoon-cottage at Clevedon, "altogether the sweetest thing to me," says Lamb, "you ever wrote." The verses had appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* two months before. . . . That Lamb's counsel was followed to some extent may be gathered from a comparison between the text of the magazine and that of 1797:—

"Once I saw
(Hallowing his sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen: he paus'd, and look'd,
With a pleas'd sadness, and gazed all around,
Then ey'd our Cottage, and gaz'd round again,
And said, *it was a blessed little place!*
And we *were* blessed!" *Monthly Magazine.*

"Once I saw
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen. Methought it calm'd
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings: for he paus'd, and look'd
With a pleas'd sadness, and gaz'd all around,
Then ey'd our cottage, and gaz'd round again,
And sigh'd and said, *it was a blessed place.*
And we *were* blessed." *Poems*, 1797.

It will be observed that Coleridge in 1797 inserted some lines which were not in the magazine. They were probably restored from a MS. copy Lamb had previously seen, and if Coleridge did not cancel all that Lamb wisely counselled, he certainly drew the sting of the "affronting simplicity" by removing the word "little." The comical ambiguity of the Bristol man's exclamation as first reported could hardly have failed to drive Lamb's dull care away for a moment or two.

[In] "the next poem to your friend," . . . [Lamb is] speaking of Coleridge's lines "To Charles Lloyd"—those beginning

"A mount, not wearisome and bare and steep."

In the "forthcoming edition" the poet improved a little the barely tolerated line, making it read,—

"As neighb'ring fountains image, each the whole,"

but did not take Lamb's hint to omit the five which closed the poem. Lamb, however, got his way—perhaps took it—when the verses were reprinted in 1803, in the volume he saw through the press for Coleridge.

"Neither shall you omit the 2 following poems. 'The hour when we shall meet again' is [only?] a fine fancy, 'tis true, but fancy catering in the service of the feeling—fetching from her stores most splendid banquets to satisfy her. Do not, do not, omit it."

So wrote Lamb of these somewhat slender verses, but his friend had composed them "during illness and in absence," and Lamb in his own heart-sickness and loneliness detected the reality which underlay the conventionality of expression. The critic slept, and even when he was awake again in 1803 was fain to let the lines be reprinted with only the concession of their worst couplet:—

"While finely-flushing float her kisses meek,
Like melted rubies, o'er my pallid cheek."

The second of the "2 following poems" was Coleridge's "Sonnet to the River Otter." The version then before him "excludes," complains Lamb, "those equally beautiful lines which deserve not to be lost, 'as the tir'd savage,' &c., and I prefer the copy in your *Watchman*. I plead for its preference." This pleading . . . was not responded to in the way Lamb wanted, but in the appendix to the 1797 volume Coleridge printed the whole of the poem on an "Autumnal Evening," to which the "tir'd savage" properly belonged. . . .

"Lloyd's, Southey's, Dermody's Sonnets." Lamb here refers to the third portion of the poetical present—the twenty-eight sonnets to be bound up with those of Bowles. Thomas Dermody (1775-1802) was an Irish poet of squalidly dissolute life. A collection of his verses appeared in 1792.

"All barrenness." From Southey's poem "The Pauper's Funeral," line 16:—

And thine old age all barrenness and blast!]

LETTER 18

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Dec. 10th, 1796.

I HAD put my letter into the post rather hastily, not expecting to have to acknowledge another from you so soon. This morning's present has made me alive again: my last night's epistle was childishly querulous; but you have put a little life into me, and I will thank you for your remembrance of me, while my sense of it is yet warm; for if I linger a day or two I may use the same phrase of acknowledgment, or similar; but the feeling that dictates it now will be gone. I shall send you a *caput mortuum*, not a *cor vivens*. Thy Watchman's, thy bellman's, verses, I do retort upon thee, thou libellous varlet,—why, you cried the hours yourself, and who made you so proud? But I submit, to show my humility, most implicitly to your dogmas. I reject entirely the copy of verses you reject. With regard to my leaving off versifying, you have said so many pretty things, so many fine compliments, ingeniously decked out in the garb of sincerity, and undoubtedly springing from a present feeling somewhat like sincerity, that you might melt the most un-muse-ical soul,—did you not (now for a Rowland compliment for your profusion of Olivers)—did you not in your very epistle, by the many pretty fancies and profusion of heart displayed in it, dissuade and discourage me from attempting anything after you. At present I have not leisure to make verses, nor

anything approaching to a fondness for the exercise. In the ignorant present time, who can answer for the future man? "At lovers' perjuries Jove laughs"—and poets have sometimes a disingenuous way of forswearing their occupation. This though is not my case. The tender cast of soul, sombred with melancholy and subsiding recollections, is favourable to the Sonnet or the Elegy; but from

> "The sainted growing woof,
> The teasing troubles keep aloof."

The music of poesy may charm for a while the importunate teasing cares of life; but the teased and troubled man is not in a disposition to make that music.

You sent me some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when, in my highly agitated and perhaps distorted state of mind, I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my own verses, all my book of extracts from Beaumont and Fletcher and a thousand sources: I burned a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept—

> "Noting ere they past away
> The little lines of yesterday."

I almost burned all your letters,—I did as bad, I lent 'em to a friend to keep out of my brother's sight, should he come and make inquisition into our papers, for, much as he dwelt upon your conversation while you were among us, and delighted to be with you, it has been his fashion ever since to depreciate and cry you down,—you were the cause of my madness—you and your damned foolish sensibility and melancholy—and he lamented with a true brotherly feeling that we ever met, even as the sober citizen, when his son went astray upon the mountains of Parnassus, is said to have "cursed wit and Poetry and Pope." I quote wrong, but no matter. These letters I lent to a friend to be out of the way for a season; but I have claimed them in vain, and shall not cease to regret their loss. Your packets, posterior to the date of my misfortunes, commencing with that valuable consolatory epistle, are every day accumulating—they are sacred things with me.

Publish your *Burns* when and how you like, it will be new to me,—my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles of yours. I am jealous of your fraternising with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns or my old favourite, Cowper. But you conciliate matters when you talk of the "divine chit-chat" of the latter: by the expression I see you thoroughly relish him. I love Mrs. Coleridge for her excuses an hundredfold more dearly than if she heaped "line upon line," out-Hannah-ing Hannah More, and had rather hear you sing "Did a very little baby"

by your family fire-side, than listen to you when you were repeating one of Bowles's sweetest sonnets in your sweet manner, while we two were indulging sympathy, a solitary luxury, by the fire-side at the Salutation. Yet have I no higher ideas of heaven. Your company was one "cordial in this melancholy vale"—the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting; converse I always and *only* can partake in. Not a soul loves Bowles here; scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament—they talk a language I understand not: I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter and with the dead in their books. My sister, indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly, our reading and knowledge from the self-same sources, our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow: never having kept separate company, or any "company" "*together*"—never having read separate books, and few books *together*—what knowledge have we to convey to each other? In our little range of duties and connexions, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us. You talk very wisely, and be not sparing of *your advice*. Continue to remember us, and to show us you do remember us: we will take as lively an interest in what concerns you and yours. All I can add to your happiness, will be sympathy. You can add to mine *more*; you can teach me wisdom. I am indeed an unreasonable correspondent; but I was unwilling to let my last night's letter go off without this qualifier: you will perceive by this my mind is easier, and you will rejoice. I do not expect or wish you to write, till you are moved; and of course shall not, till you announce to me that event, think of writing myself. Love to Mrs. Coleridge and David Hartley, and my kind remembrance to Lloyd, if he is with you.

C. Lamb.

I will get "Nature and Art,"—have not seen it yet—nor any of Jeremy Taylor's works.

Note

["*Caput mortuum . . . cor vivens.*" Lamb contrasts the thanks that come from a cold intellect (dead head) with those proceeding quick and warm from the heart.

The reference to the bellman's verses (the bellman, or watchman, used to leave verses at the houses on his beat at Easter as a re-

minder of his deserts) is not quite clear. Lamb evidently had submitted for the new volume some lines which Coleridge would not pass—possibly the poem in Letter No. 16.

Coleridge some time before had sent to Lamb the very sweet lines relative to Burns, under the title, "To a Friend who had Declared His Intention of Writing no more Poetry."

"At lovers' perjuries, they say, Jove laughs" ("Romeo and Juliet," II., 2, 92, 93). "Ignorant present." See note on page 47.

"The sainted growing woof," etc. From Collins' "Ode on the Poetical Character":—

> The dangerous Passions kept aloof,
> Far from the sainted growing woof.

"Noting ere they past away . . ." From Rogers' "Pleasures of Memory," Part II.—"past" for "fade."

"Cursed wit and Poetry and Pope." A slight confusion is in Lamb's mind: the passage in Pope's "Epistle to Arbuthnot" runs (23-26):—

> Arthur, whose giddy son neglects the laws,
> Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:
> Poor Cornus sees his frantic wife elope,
> And curses Wit, and Poetry, and Pope.

"Hannah More." The reference is to the prolixity of the author of *Sacred Dramas*. "Line upon line" (Isaiah xxviii. 13).

"Did a very little baby." In the Appendix to Vol. I. of the 1847 edition of the *Biog. Lit.*, Sara Coleridge writes, concerning children and domestic evenings, "'Did a very little babby make a very great noise?' is the first line of a nursery song, in which Mr. Coleridge recorded some of his experience on this recondite subject." The song has disappeared.

"Cordial in this melancholy vale." From Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night," verse ix., line 6.

Nature and Art was Mrs. Inchbald's story, published in 1796. Lamb later became an enthusiast for Jeremy Taylor (see page 218).]

LETTER 19

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Dated outside: Jan. 2, 1797.]

YOUR success in the higher species of the Ode is such, as bespeaks you born for atchievements of loftier enterprize than to linger in the lowly train of songsters and sonneteurs. Sincerely

I think your Ode one of the finest I have read. The opening is in the spirit of the sublimest allegory. The idea of the "skirts of the departing year, seen far onwards, waving on the wind" is one of those noble Hints at which the Reader's imagination is apt to kindle into grand conceptions. Do the words "impetuous" and "solemnize" harmonize well in the same line? Think and judge. In the 2d strophe, there seems to be too much play of fancy to be consistent with that continued elevation we are taught to expect from the strain of the foregoing. The parenthized line (by the way I abominate parentheses in this kind of poetry) at the beginng of 7th page, and indeed all that gradual description of the throes and pangs of nature in childbirth, I do not much like, and those 4 first lines,—I mean "tomb gloom anguish and languish"—rise not above mediocrity. In the Epode, your mighty genius comes again: "I marked ambition" &c. Thro' the whole Epod indeed you carry along our souls in a full spring tide of feeling and imaginat^{n}. Here is the "Storm of Music," as Cowper expresses it. Would it not be more abrupt "Why does the northern Conqueress stay" or "where does the northern Conqueress stay"?—this change of measure, rather than the feebler "Ah! whither". "Foul her life and dark her tomb, mighty army of the dead, dance like deathflies" &c.: here is genius, here is poetry, rapid, irresistible. The concluding line, is it not a personif: without use? "Nec deus intersit"—except indeed for rhyme sake. Would the laws of Strophe and antistrophe, which, if they are as unchangeable, I suppose are about as wise, [as] the Mede and Persian laws, admit of expunging that line altogether, and changing the preceding one to "and he, poor madman, deemd it quenchd in endless night?"—*fond* madman or *proud* madman if you will, but *poor* is more contemptuous. If I offer alterations of my own to your poetry, and admit not yours in mine, it is upon the principle of a present to a rich man being graciously accepted, and the same present to a poor man being considered as in insult. To return—The Antistrophe that follows is not inferior in grandeur or original: but is I think not faultless—e: g: How is Memory *alone*, when all the etherial multitude are there? Reflect. Again "storiedst thy sad hours" is harsh, I need not tell you, but you have gained your point in expressing much meaning in few words: "Purple locks and snow white glories" "mild Arcadians ever blooming" "seas of milk and ships of amber" these are things the Muse talks about when, to borrow H. Walpole's witty phrase, she is not finely-phrenzied, only a little light-headed, that's all. "Purple locks." They may manage things differently in fairy land, but your "golden tresses" are more to my fancy. The spirit of the Earth is a most happy conceit, and the last line is one of the luckiest I ever heard—"*and stood up beautiful* before the cloudy

seat." I cannot enough admire it. 'Tis somehow picturesque in the very sound. The 2d Antistrophe (what is the meaning of these things?) is fine and faultless (or to vary the alliteration and not diminish the affectation) beautiful and blameless. I only except to the last line as meaningless after the preceding, and useless entirely —besides, why disjoin "nature and the world" here, when you had confounded both in their pregnancy: "the common earth and nature," recollect, a little before—And there is a dismal superfluity in the unmeaning vocable "unhurld"—the worse, as it is so evidently a rhyme-fetch.—"Death like he dozes" is a prosaic conceit—indeed all the Epode as far as "brother's corse" I most heartily commend to annihilation. The enthusiast of the lyre should not be so feebly, so tediously, delineative of his own feelings; 'tis not the way to become "Master of our affections." The address to Albion is very agreeable, and concludes even beautifully: "speaks safety to his island child"—"Sworded"—epithet *I* would change for "cruel". The immediately succeeding lines are prosaic: "mad avarice" is an unhappy combination; and "the coward distance yet with kindling pride" is not only reprehensible for the antithetical turn, but as it is a quotation: "safe distance" and "coward distance" you have more than once had recourse to before—And the Lyric Muse, in her enthusiasm, should talk the language of her country, something removed from common use, something "recent," unborrowed. The dreams of destruction "soothing her fierce solitude," are vastly grand and terrific: still you weaken the effect by that superfluous and easily-conceived parenthesis that finishes the page. The foregoing image, few minds *could* have conceived, few tongues could have so cloath'd; "muttring destempered triumph" &c. is vastly fine. I hate imperfect beginnings and endings. Now your concluding stanza is worthy of so fine an ode. The beginning was awakening and striking; the ending is soothing and solemn—Are you serious when you ask whether you shall admit this ode? it would be strange infatuation to leave out your Chatterton; mere insanity to reject this. Unless you are fearful that the splendid thing may be a means of "eclipsing many a softer satellite" that twinkles thro' the volume. Neither omit the annex'd little poem. For my part, detesting alliterations, I should make the 1st line "Away, with this fantastic pride of woe." Well may you relish Bowles's allegory. I need only tell you, I have read, and will only add, that I dislike ambition's name *gilded* on his helmet-cap, and that I think, among the more striking personages you notice, you omitted the *most* striking, Remorse! "He saw the trees—the sun—then hied him to his cave again"!!! The 2d stanza of mania is superfl: the 1st was never exceeded. The 2d is too methodic: for *her*. With all its load of beauties, I am more *affected* with the 6 first stanzas of the

Elegiac poem written during sickness. Tell me your feelings. If the fraternal sentiment conveyed in the following lines will atone for the total want of anything like merit or genius in it, I desire you will print it next after my other sonnet to my sister.

Friend of my earliest years, & childish days,
My joys, my sorrows, thou with me hast shared
Companion dear; & we alike have fared
Poor pilgrims we, thro' life's unequal ways
It were unwisely done, should we refuse
To cheer our path, as featly as we may,
Our lonely path to cheer, as travellers use
With merry song, quaint tale, or roundelay.
And we will sometimes talk past troubles o'er,
Of mercies shewn, & all our sickness heal'd,
And in his judgments God remembring love;
And we will learn to praise God evermore
For those "Glad tidings of great joy" reveal'd
By that sooth messenger, sent from above.

1797.

If you think the epithet "sooth" quaint, substitute "blest messenger." I hope you are printing my sonnets, as I directed you—particularly the 2d. "Methinks" &c. with my last added 6 lines at ye end: and all of 'em as I last made 'em.

This has been a sad long letter of business, with no room in it for what honest Bunyan terms heart-work. I have just room left to congratulate you on your removal to Stowey; to wish success to all your projects; to "bid fair peace" be to that house; to send my love and best wishes, breathed warmly, after your dear Sara, and her little David Hartley. If Lloyd be with you, bid him write to me: I feel to whom I am obliged primarily for two very friendly letters I have received already from him. A dainty sweet book that "Art and Nature" is. I am at present re-re-reading Priestley's examinat of the Scotch Drs: how the Rogue strings 'em up! three together! You have no doubt read that clear, strong, humorous, most entertaining piece of reasoning. If not, procure it, and be exquisitely amused. I wish I could get more of Priestley's works. Can you recommend me to any more books, easy of access, such as circulating shops afford? God bless you and yours.

Poor Mary is very unwell with a sore throat and a slight species of scarlet fever. \ God bless her too.

Monday Morning, at Office.

NOTE

[Coleridge had just published in quarto his *Ode on the Departing Year*. In order that Lamb's letter may be intelligible it is necessary, I think, to give the text of this edition in full. It will

be found in the Appendix to Vol. VII. of this edition, page 947. Lamb returns to his criticism in the letter on page 80.

"Storm of music." In Cowper's "Table Talk," line 491 :—

> The storm of music shakes th' astonish'd crowd.

"*Nec deus intersit.*" Horace *Ars Poet.*, 191, "Nor let a god interfere."

"Mild Arcadians ever blooming." From Pope's "Song. By a Person of Quality," verse 2, line 1.

"Seas of milk and ships of amber." From Otway's "Venice Preserved," Act V., Scene 2, last line :—

> Lutes, Laurels, Seas of Milk and Ships of Amber.

Horace Walpole's remark was that when Otway's heroine, Belvidera, thus rambled she was not mad but light-headed.

"They may manage things differently in fairy land." Lamb may have had in mind Sterne's sentence in the *Sentimental Journey*—"They order, said I, this matter better in France."

The "annexed little poem" was that "Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune," which began, and still begins, "Hence that fantastic wantonness of woe."

Bowles' allegory was the poem, "Hope, An Allegorical Sketch," recently published. Stanza XVI. begins :—

> Suddenly, lifting high his pond'rous spear,
> A mailed man came forth with scornful pride,
> I saw him tow'ring in his dark career
> Along the valley like a giant stride :
> Upon his helm, in letters of bright gold,
> That to the sun's meridian splendour shone,
> Ambition's name far off I might behold.

This is part of Stanza XXV. :—

> Came grim Remorse : as fixt in thought he stood,
> His senses pierc'd by the unwonted tone
> He heard—the blood drops from his locks he shook—
> He saw the trees that wav'd, the sun that shone,
> He cast around an agonized look ;
> Then with a ghastly smile that spoke his pain,
> He hied him to his cave in thickest shades again.

And this is the first stanza describing mania :—

> Next to the gleamy glen, poor Mania stray'd :
> Most pale and wild, yet gentle was her look,
> A slender garland she of straw had made,
> Of flow'rs, and rushes from the running brook ;
> But as she sadly pass'd, the tender sound
> Of its sharp pang her wounded heart beguil'd,
> She dropp'd her half-made garland on the ground,
> And then she sigh'd, and then in tears she smil'd,
> But smiled so, that Pity would have said,
> "O God, be merciful to that poor hapless maid !"

These are the first six of the "Elegiac Stanzas Written During Sickness at Bath, December, 1795":—

When I lie musing on my bed alone,
And listen to the wintry waterfall;
And many moments that are past and gone,
(Moments of sunshine and of joy) recall;

Though the long night is dark and damp around,
And no still star hangs out its friendly flame;
And the winds sweep the sash with sullen sound,
And freezing palsy creeps o'er all my frame;

I catch consoling phantasies that spring
From the thick gloom, and as the night-airs beat,
They touch my heart, like the wild wires that ring
In mournful modulations, strange and sweet.

Was it the voice of thee, my bury'd friend?
Was it the whisper'd vow of faithful love?
Do I in ****** green shades thy steps attend,
And hear the high pines murmur thus above?

'Twas not thy voice, my bury'd friend!—O, no:
'Twas not, O ******, the murmur of thy trees;
But at the thought I feel my bosom glow,
And woo the dream whose air-drawn shadows please.

And I can think I see the groves again,
The larches that yon peaceful roof embow'r,
The airy down, the cattle-speckl'd plain,
And the grey sunshine on the village tow'r.

The portion of the letter beginning with "If the fraternal sentiment," is all of this letter that hitherto has been published. The poem was not included in the 1797 volume, but was printed in the *Monthly Magazine*, October, 1797. Coleridge had moved to his cottage at Nether Stowey on the last day of 1796.

"Bid fair peace" (*Lycidas*, line 22).

Priestley's book would be *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*, 1774.]

LETTER 20

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. Jan. 10, 1797.]

Saturday.

I AM completely reconciled to that second strophe, and wa[i]ve all objection. In spite of the Grecian Lyrists, I persist on [in] thinking your brief personification of Madness useless; reverence

forbids me to say, impertinent. Golden locks and snow white glories are as incongruous as your former, and if the great Italian painters, of whom my friend knows about as much as the man in the moon, if these great gentlemen be on your side, I see no harm in retaining the purple—the glories that I have observed to encircle the heads of saints and madonnas in those old paintings have been mostly of a dirty drab-color'd yellow—a dull gambogium. Keep your old line: it will excite a confused kind of pleasurable idea in the reader's mind, not clear enough to be called a conception, nor just enough, I think, to reduce to painting. It is a rich line, you say, and riches hide a many faults. I maintain, that in the 2d antist: you *do* disjoin Nature and the world, and contrary to your conduct in the 2d strophe. "Nature joins her groans"—joins with *whom*, a God's name, but the world or earth in line preceding? But this is being over curious, I acknowledge. Nor *did* I call the *last* line useless, I only objected to "unhurld." I cannot be made to like the former part of that 2d Epode; I cannot be made to feel it, as I do the parallel places in Isaiah, Jeremy and Daniel. Whether it is that in the present case the rhyme impairs the efficacy; or that the circumstances are feigned, and we are conscious of a made up lye in the case, and the narrative is too long winded to preserve the semblance of truth; or that lines 8. 9. 10. 14 in partic: 17 and 18 are mean and unenthusiastic; or that lines 5 to 8 in their change of rhyme shew like art—I don't know, but it strikes me as something meant to affect, and failing in its purpose. Remember my waywardness of feeling is single, and singly stands opposed to all your friends, and what is one among many! This I know, that your quotations from the prophets have never escaped me, and never fail'd to affect me strongly. I hate that simile. I am glad you have amended that parenthesis in the account of Destruction. I like it well now. Only utter [? omit] that history of child-bearing, and all will do well. Let the obnoxious Epode remain, to terrify such of your friends as are willing to be terrified. I think I would omit the Notes, not as not good per se, but as uncongenial with the dignity of the Ode. I need not repeat my wishes to have my little sonnets printed verbatim my last way. In particular, I fear lest you should prefer printing my first sonnet, as you have done more than once, "did the wand of Merlin wave"? It looks so like *Mr.* Merlin, the ingenious successor of the immortal Merlin, now living in good health and spirits, and flourishing in magical reputation in Oxford Street; and on my life, one half who read it would understand it so. Do put 'em forth finally as I have, in various letters, settled it; for first a man's self is to be pleased, and then his friends,—and, of course the greater number of his friends, if they differ inter se. Thus taste may safely be put to

the vote. I do long to see our names together—not for vanity's-sake, and naughty pride of heart altogether, for not a living soul, I know or am intimate with, will scarce read the book—so I shall gain nothing quoad famam,—and yet there is a little vanity mixes in it, I cannot help denying. I am aware of the unpoetical cast of the 6 last lines of my last sonnet, and think myself unwarranted in smuggling so tame a thing into the book; only the sentiments of those 6 lines are thoroughly congenial to me in my state of mind, and I wish to accumulate perpetuating tokens of my affection to poor Mary; that it has no originality in its cast, nor anything in the feelings, but what is common and natural to thousands, nor aught properly called poetry, I see; still it will tend to keep present to my mind a view of things which I ought to indulge. These 6 lines, too, have not, to a reader, a connectedness with the foregoing. Omit it, if you like.—What a treasure it is to my poor indolent and unemployed mind, thus to lay hold on a subject to talk about, tho' 'tis but a sonnet and that of the lowest order. How mournfully inactive I am!—'Tis night: good-night.

My sister, I thank God, is nigh recovered. She was seriously ill. Do, in your next letter, and that right soon, give me some satisfaction respecting your present situation at Stowey. Is it a farm you have got? and what does your worship know about farming? Coleridge, I want you to write an Epic poem. Nothing short of it can satisfy the vast capacity of true poetic genius. Having one great End to direct all your poetical faculties to, and on which to lay out your hopes, your ambition, will shew you to what you are equal. By the sacred energies of Milton, by the dainty sweet and soothing phantasies of honeytongued Spenser, I adjure you to attempt the Epic. Or do something more ample than writing an occasional brief ode or sonnet; something "to make yourself for ever known,—to make the age to come your own". But I prate; doubtless you meditate something. When you are exalted among the Lords of Epic fame, I shall recall with pleasure, and exultingly, the days of your humility, when you disdained not to put forth in the same volume with mine, your religious musings, and that other poem from the Joan of Arc, those promising first fruits of high renown to come. You have learning, you have fancy, you have enthusiasm—you have strength and amplitude of wing enow for flights like those I recommend. In the vast and unexplored regions of fairyland, there is ground enough unfound and uncultivated; search there, and realize your favourite Susquehanah scheme. In all our comparisons of taste, I do not know whether I have ever heard your opinion of a poet, very dear to me, the now out of fashion Cowley—favor me with your judgment of him, and tell me if his prose essays, in particular, as well as no inconsiderable

part of his verse, be not delicious. I prefer the graceful rambling of his essays, even to the courtly elegance and ease of Addison—abstracting from this the latter's exquisite humour. Why is not your poem on Burns in the Monthly Magazine? I was much disappointed. I have a pleasurable but confused remembrance of it.

When the little volume is printed, send me 3 or 4, at all events not more than 6 copies, and tell me if I put you to any additional expence, by printing with you. I have no thought of the kind, and in that case, must reimburse you. My epistle is a model of unconnectedness, but I have no partic: subject to write on, and must proportion my scribble in some degree to the increase of postage. It is not quite fair, considering how burdensome your correspondence from different quarters must be, to add to it with so little shew of reason. I will make an end for this evening. Sunday Even:—Farewell.

Priestly, whom I sin in almost adoring, speaks of "such a choice of company, as tends to keep up that right bent, and firmness of mind, which a necessary intercourse with the world would otherwise warp and relax. Such fellowship is the true balsam of life, its cement is infinitely more durable than that of the friendships of the world, and it looks for its proper fruit, and complete gratification, to the life beyond the Grave." Is there a possible chance for such an one as me to realize in this world, such friendships? Where am I to look for 'em? What testimonials shall I bring of my being worthy of such friendship? Alas! the great and good go together in separate Herds, and leave such as me to lag far far behind in all intellectual, and far more grievous to say, in all moral, accomplishments. Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance: not one Christian: not one but undervalues Christianity. Singly what am I to do? Wesley (have you read his life? was *he* not an elevated character?) Wesley has said, "Religion is not a solitary thing." Alas! it necessarily is so with me, or next to solitary. 'Tis true, you write to me. But correspondence by letter, and personal intimacy, are very widely different. Do, do write to me, and do some good to my mind, already how much "warped and relaxed" by the world!—'Tis the conclusion of another evening. Good night. God have us all in his keeping.

If you are sufficiently at leisure, oblige me with an account of your plan of life at Stowey—your literary occupations and prospects—in short make me acquainted with every circumstance, which, as relating to you, can be interesting to me. Are you yet a Berkleyan? Make me one. I rejoice in being, speculatively, a necessarian. Would to God, I were habitually a practical one. Confirm me in the faith of that great and glorious doctrine, and keep me steady

in the contemplation of it. You sometime since exprest an intention you had of finishing some extensive work on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. Have you let that intention go? Or are you doing any thing towards it? Make to yourself other ten talents. My letter is full of nothingness. I talk of nothing. But I must talk. I love to write to you. I take a pride in it. It makes me think less meanly of myself. It makes me think myself not totally disconnected from the better part of Mankind. I know, I am too dissatisfied with the beings around me,—but I cannot help occasionally exclaiming "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar"—I know I am no ways better in practice than my neighbours—but I have a taste for religion, an occasional earnest aspiration after perfection, which they have not. I gain nothing by being with such as myself—we encourage one another in mediocrity—I am always longing to be with men more excellent than myself. All this must sound odd to you; but these are my predominant feelings, when I sit down to write to you, and I should put force upon my mind, were I to reject them. Yet I rejoyce, and feel my privilege with gratitude, when I have been reading some wise book, such as I have just been reading—Priestley on Philosophical necessity—in the thought that I enjoy a kind of communion, a kind of friendship even, with the great and good. Books are to me instead of friends. I wish they did not resemble the latter in their scarceness.—And how does little David Hartley? "Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?"—does his mighty name work wonders yet upon his little frame, and opening mind? I did not distinctly understand you,—you don't mean to make an actual ploughman of him? Mrs. C—— is no doubt well,—give my kindest respects to her. Is Lloyd with you yet?—are you intimate with Southey? What poems is he about to publish—he hath a most prolific brain, and is indeed a most sweet poet. But how can you answer all the various mass of interrogation I have put to you in the course of this sheet. Write back just what you like, only write something, however brief. I have now nigh finished my page, and got to the end of another evening (Monday evening)—and my eyes are heavy and sleepy, and my brain unsuggestive. I have just heart enough awake to say Good night once more, and God love you my dear friend, God love us all. Mary bears an affectionate remembrance of you. CHARLES LAMB.

NOTE

[The criticisms contained in the first paragraph bear upon Coleridge's "Ode on the Departing Year," which had already

appeared twice, in the *Cambridge Intelligencer* and in a quarto issued by Cottle, and was now being revised for the second edition of the *Poems*.

The personification of Madness was contained in the line, afterwards omitted:—

> For still does Madness roam on Guilt's black dizzy height.

Lamb's objection to this line, considering his home circumstances at the time, was very natural. In Antistrophe I. Coleridge originally said of the ethereal multitude in Heaven—

> Whose purple Locks with snow-white Glories shone.

In the 1797 *Poems* the line ran—

> Whose wreathed Locks with snow-white Glories shone;

and in the final version—

> Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.

Coleridge must have supported his case, in the letter which Lamb is answering, by a reference to the Italian painters.

In connection with Lamb's other criticisms see the poem on page 947, in the Appendix. Coleridge in the 1797 edition of his *Poems* made no alteration to meet Lamb's strictures. The simile that Lamb hated is, I imagine, that of the soldier on the war field. "The history of child-bearing" referred to is the passage at the end of Strophe II. To the quarto Coleridge had appended various notes. In 1797 he had only three, and added an argument.

"I need not repeat my wishes." In Talfourd and other editions this letter has always begun with these words.

The reference to Merlin will be explained by a glance at the parallel sonnets on page 24. Merlin was entirely Coleridge's idea. A conjuror of that name was just then among London's attractions.

The "last sonnet," which was not the last in the 1797 volume, but the 6th, was that beginning "If from my lips" (see page 2).

In connection with Lamb's question on the Stowey husbandry, the following quotation from a letter from Coleridge to the Rev. J. P. Estlin, belonging to this period, is interesting:—

> Our house is better than we expected—there is a comfortable bedroom and sitting-room for C. Lloyd, and another for us, a room for Nanny, a kitchen, and out-house. Before our door a clear brook runs of very soft water; and in the back yard is a nice *well* of fine spring water. We have a very pretty garden, and large enough to find us vegetables and employment, and I am already an expert gardener, and both my hands can exhibit a callum as testimonials of their industry. We have likewise a sweet orchard,

Writing a little before this to Charles Lloyd, senior, Coleridge had said: "My days I shall devote to the acquirement of practical husbandry and horticulture."

"To make yourself for ever known . . ." Cowley's "Motto" has:—

> What shall I do to be for ever known,
> And make the age to come my own?

The poem on Burns was that "To a Friend [Lamb] who had Declared His Intention of Writing no more Poetry." It was printed first in a Bristol paper and then in the *Annual Anthology*, 1800.

Priestley's remark is in the Dedication to John Lee, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, of "A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity in a Correspondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley," etc., included in *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*, Vol. III., 1778. The discussion arose from the publication by Priestley of *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated*, which itself is an appendage to *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*.

Three lives at least of John Wesley were published in the two years following his death in 1791. Coleridge later studied Wesley closely, for he added valuable notes to Southey's life (see the 1846 edition).

"Warped and relaxed." See the quotation from Priestley.

"A Berkleyan," *i.e.*, a follower of Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753), who in his *New Theory of Vision* and later works maintained that "what we call matter has no actual existence, and that the impressions which we believe ourselves to receive from it are not, in fact, derived from anything external to ourselves, but are produced within us by a certain disposition of the mind, the immediate operation of God" (Benham's *Dictionary of Religion*).

Coleridge when sending Southey one version of his poem to Charles Lamb, entitled "This Lime-tree Bower my Prison" (to which we shall come later), in July, 1797, appended to the following passage the note, "You remember I am a *Berkleian*":—

> Struck with joy's deepest calm, and gazing round
> On the wide view, may gaze till all doth seem
> Less gross than bodily; a living thing
> That acts upon the mind, and with such hues
> As clothe the Almighty Spirit, when He makes
> Spirits perceive His presence!

"A Necessarian." We should now say a fatalist.

Coleridge's work on the "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion," which has before been mentioned, was, if ever begun, never completed.

"Woe is me . . ." From Psalms cxx. 5.

"*Ecquid in antiquam virtutem.*" See *Æneid*, III., 342-343 :—

Ecquid in antiquam virtutem animosque viriles
Et pater Æneas et avunculus excitat Hector?

(Do his father Æneas and his uncle Hector rouse him [*i.e.*, Ascanius, *i.e.*, little Hartley] to anything of their ancient valour and manly spirits?)]

LETTER 21

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Dated at end: January 18, 1797.]

DEAR Col,—You have learnd by this time, with surprise, no doubt, that Lloyd is with me in town. The emotions I felt on his coming so unlooked for are not ill expressed in what follows, & what, if you do not object to them as too personal, & to the world obscure, or otherwise wanting in worth, I should wish to make a part of our little volume.

I shall be sorry if that vol comes out, as it necessarily must do, unless you print those very schoolboyish verses I sent you on not getting leave to come down to Bristol last Summer. I say I shall be sorry that I have addrest you in nothing which can appear in our joint volume.

So frequently, so habitually as you dwell on my thoughts, 'tis some wonder those thoughts came never yet in Contact with a poetical mood—But you dwell in my heart of hearts, and I love you in all the naked honesty of prose. God bless you, and all your little domestic circle—my tenderest remembrances to your Beloved Sara, & a smile and a kiss from me to your dear dear little David Hartley—The verses I refer to above, slightly amended, I have sent (forgetting to ask your leave, tho' indeed I gave them only your initials) to the Month: Mag: where they may possibly appear next month, and where I hope to recognise your Poem on Burns.

TO CHARLES LLOYD, AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Alone, obscure, without a friend,
A cheerless, solitary thing,
Why seeks my Lloyd the stranger out?
What offring can the stranger bring

Of social scenes, home-bred delights,
That him in aught compensate may
For Stowey's pleasant winter nights,
For loves & friendships far away?

In brief oblivion to forego
Friends, such as thine, so justly dear,
And be awhile with me content
To stay, a kindly loiterer, here—

For this a gleam of random joy,
Hath flush'd my unaccustom'd cheek,
And, with an o'er-charg'd bursting heart,
I feel the thanks, I cannot speak.

O! sweet are all the Muses' lays,
And sweet the charm of matin bird—
'Twas long, since these estranged ears
The sweeter voice of friend had heard.

The voice hath spoke: the pleasant sounds
In memory's ear, in after time
Shall live, to sometimes rouse a tear,
And sometimes prompt an honest rhyme.

For when the transient charm is fled,
And when the little week is o'er,
To cheerless, friendless solitude
When I return, as heretofore—

Long, long, within my aching heart,
The grateful sense shall cherishd be;
I'll think less meanly of myself,
That Lloyd will sometimes think on me.

1797.

O Col: would to God you were in London with us, or we two at Stowey with you all. Lloyd takes up his abode at the Bull & Mouth Inn,—the Cat & Salutation would have had a charm more forcible for me. *O noctes cœnæque Deûm!* Anglice—Welch rabbits, punch, & poesy.

Should you be induced to publish those very schoolboyish verses, print 'em as they will occur, if at all, in the Month: Mag: yet I should feel ashamed that to you I wrote nothing better. But they are too personal, & almost trifling and obscure withal. Some lines of mine to Cowper were in last Month: Mag: they have not body of thought enough to plead for the retaining of 'em.

My sister's kind love to you all.

C. Lamb.

Note

[The verses to Lloyd were included in Coleridge's 1797 volume; but the verses concerning the frustrated Bristol holiday (see pages 35 and 39) were omitted. Concerning this visit to London Charles Lloyd wrote to his brother Robert: "I left Charles Lamb very warmly interested in his favour, and have kept up a regular correspondence with him ever since; he is a most interesting young man." Only two letters from Lamb to Charles Lloyd have survived (see pages 150 and 623).

"We two"—Lamb and Lloyd. Not Lamb and his sister.

The Bull and Mouth, afterwards the Queen's Hotel, was in St. Martin's Le Grand. It was destroyed to make room for the Post Office buildings. The site of the old Bull and Mouth Quakers' meeting was close by, but Lloyd can hardly have found that an attraction.

"*O noctes cœnæque Deûm!*" (Horace, Satire II., 6, 65)—"O nights and feasts divine!"

For the lines to Cowper see page 87.

"Body of thought"—a phrase of Coleridge's.]

LETTER 22

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Begun Sunday, February 5, 1797.
Dated on address by mistake: January 5, 1797.]

SUNDAY MORNING.—You cannot surely mean to degrade the Joan of Arc into a pot girl. You are not going, I hope, to annex to that most splendid ornament of Southey's poem all this cock and a bull story of Joan the publican's daughter of Neufchatel, with the lamentable episode of a waggoner, his wife, and six children; the texture will be most lamentably disproportionate. The first forty or fifty lines of these addenda are, no doubt, in their way, admirable, too; but many would prefer the Joan of Southey.

"On mightiest deeds to brood Of shadowy vastness, such as made my heart Throb fast. Anon I paused, and in a state Of half expectance listen'd to the wind;" "They wonder'd at me, who had known me once A chearful careless damsel;" "The eye, That of the circling throng and of the visible world Unseeing, saw the shapes of holy phantasy;" I see nothing in your description of the Maid equal to these. There is a fine originality certainly in those lines—"For she had lived in this bad world as in a place of tombs, And touch'd not the pollutions of the Dead"—but your "fierce vivacity" is a faint copy of the "fierce & terrible benevolence" of Southey. Added to this, that it will look like rivalship in you, & extort a comparison with S,—I think to your disadvantage. And the lines, consider'd in themselves as an addition to what you had before written (strains of a far higher mood), are but such as Madame Fancy loves in some of her more familiar moods, at such times as she has met Noll Goldsmith, & walk'd and talk'd with him, calling him old acquaintance. Southey certainly has no pretensions to vie with you in the sublime of poetry; but he tells a plain tale better than you. I will enumerate some woeful blemishes, some of 'em sad deviations from that simplicity which

was your aim. "Hail'd who might be near" (the canvas-coverture moving, by the by, is laughable); "a woman & six children" (by the way,—why not nine children, it would have been just half as pathetic again): "statues of sleep they seem'd." "Frost-mangled wretch:" "green putridity:" "hail'd him immortal" (rather ludicrous again): "voiced a sad and simple tale" (abominable!): "unprovender'd:" "such his tale:" "Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffer'd" (a most *insufferable line*): "amazements of affright:" "the hot sore brain attributes its own hues of ghastliness and torture" (what shocking confusion of ideas!) In these delineations of common & natural feelings, in the familiar walks of poetry, you seem to resemble Montauban dancing with Roubigné's tenants, "much of his native loftiness remained in the execution." I was reading your Religious Musings the other day, & sincerely I think it the noblest poem in the language, next after the Paradise lost; & even that was not made the vehicle of such grand truths. "There is one mind," &c., down to "Almighty's Throne," are without a rival in the whole compass of my poetical reading. "Stands in the sun, & with no partial gaze Views all creation"—I wish I could have written those lines. I rejoyce that I am able to relish them. The loftier walks of Pindus are your proper region. There you have no compeer in modern times. Leave the lowlands, unenvied, in possession of such men as Cowper & Southey. Thus am I pouring balsam into the wounds I may have been inflicting on my poor friend's vanity. In your notice of Southey's new volume you omit to mention the most pleasing of all, the Miniature "There were Who form'd high hopes and flattering ones of thee, Young Robert. Spirit of Spenser!—was the wanderer wrong?" Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson in his life of Waller gives a most delicious specimen of him, & adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, "it may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend, Mr. Hoole." I endeavour'd—I wish'd to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr. Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than smallest small beer sun-vinegared. Your dream, down to that exquisite line—"I can't tell half his adventures," is a most happy resemblance of Chaucer. The remainder is so so. The best line, I think, is, "He belong'd, I believe, to the witch Melancholy." By the way, when will our volume come out? Don't delay it till you have written a new Joan of Arc. Send what letters you please by me, & in any way you choose, single or double. The India Co. is better adapted to answer the cost than the generality of my friend's correspondents,—such poor & honest dogs as John Thelwall, particularly. I can-

not say I know Colson, at least intimately. I once supped with him & Allen. I think his manners very pleasing. I will not tell you what I think of Lloyd, for he may by chance come to see this letter, and that thought puts a restraint on me. I cannot think what subject would suit your epic genius; some philosophical subject, I conjecture, in which shall be blended the Sublime of Poetry & of Science. Your proposed Hymns will be a fit preparatory study wherewith "to discipline your young noviciate soul." I grow dull; I'll go walk myself out of my dulness.

Sunday Night.—You & Sara are very good to think so kindly & so favourably of poor Mary. I would to God all did so too. But I very much fear she must not think of coming home in my father's lifetime. It is very hard upon her. But our circumstances are peculiar, & we must submit to them. God be praised she is so well as she is. She bears her situation as one who has no right to complain. My poor old aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me fag, when I, school-boy like, only despised her for it, & used to be ashamed to see her come & sit herself down on the old coal hole steps as you went into the old grammar school, & opend her apron & bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me—the good old creature is now lying on her death bed. I cannot bear to think on her deplorable state. To the shock she received on that our evil day, from which she never completely recovered, I impute her illness. She says, poor thing, she is glad she is come home to die with me. I was always her favourite: "No after friendship e'er can raise The endearments of our early days, Nor e'er the heart such fondness prove, As when it first began to love." Lloyd has kindly left me for a keep-sake, John Woolman. You have read it, he says, & like it. Will you excuse one short extract? I think it could not have escaped you:—"Small treasure to a resigned mind is sufficient. How happy is it to be content with a little, to live in humility, & feel that in us which breathes out this language—Abba! Father!" ——I am almost ashamed to patch up a letter in this miscellaneous sort; but I please myself in the thought, that anything from me will be acceptable to you. I am rather impatient, childishly so, to see our names affixed to the same common volume. Send me two, when it does come out; 2 will be enough—or indeed 1—but 2 better. I have a dim recollection that, when in town, you were talking of the Origin of Evil as a most prolific subject for a long poem. Why not adopt it, Coleridge? there would be room for imagination. Or the description (from a Vision or Dream, suppose) of an Utopia in one of the planets (the Moon,

for instance). Or a Five Days' Dream, which shall illustrate, in sensible imagery, Hartley's 5 motives to conduct:—sensation, imagination, ambition, sympathy, Theopathy. 1st banquets, music, etc., effeminacy,—and their insufficiency. 2d "beds of hyacinth & roses, where young Adonis oft reposes;" "fortunate Isles;" "The pagan Elysium," &c., &c.; poetical pictures; antiquity as pleasing to the fancy;—their emptiness, madness, etc. 3d warriors, poets; some famous, yet more forgotten, their fame or oblivion now alike indifferent, pride, vanity, &c. 4th all manner of pitiable stories, in Spenser-like verse—love—friendship, relationship, &c. 5th Hermits—Christ and his apostles—martyrs—heaven—&c., &c. An imagination like yours, from these scanty hints, may expand into a thousand great Ideas—if indeed you at all comprehend my scheme, which I scarce do myself.

Monday Morn.—"A London letter. 9¼." Look you, master poet, I have remorse as well as another man, & my bowels can sound upon occasion. But I must put you to this charge, for I cannot keep back my protest, however ineffectual, against the annexing your latter lines to those former—this putting of new wine into old bottles. This my duty done, I will cease from writing till you invent some more reasonable mode of conveyance. Well may the "ragged followers of the nine" set up for flocci-nauci-what-do-you-call-'em-ists! And I do not wonder that in their splendid visions of Utopias in America they protest against the admission of those *yellow*-complexioned, *copper*-color'd, *white*-liver'd Gentlemen, who never proved themselves *their* friends. Don't you think your verses on a Young Ass too trivial a companion for the Religious Musings? "Scoundrel monarch," alter *that;* and the Man of Ross is scarce admissible as it now stands curtailed of its fairer half: reclaim its property from the Chatterton, which it does but encumber, & it will be a rich little poem. I hope you expunge great part of the old notes in the new edition. That, in particular, most barefaced unfounded impudent assertion, that Mr. Rogers is indebted for his story to Loch Lomond, a poem by Bruce! I have read the latter. I scarce think you have. Scarce anything is common to them both. The poor author of the Pleasures of Memory was sorely hurt, Dyer says, by the accusation of unoriginality. He never saw the Poem. I long to read your Poem on Burns; I retain so indistinct a memory of it. In what shape and how does it come into public? As you leave off writing poetry till you finish your Hymns, I suppose you print now all you have got by you. You have scarce enough unprinted to make a 2d volume with Lloyd. Tell me all about it. What is become of Cowper? Lloyd told me of some verses on

his mother. If you have them by you, pray send 'em me. I do so love him! Never mind their merit. May be *I* may like 'em—as your taste and mine do not always exactly *indentify*. Yours,

LAMB.

NOTE

[Coleridge intended to print in his new edition the lines that he had contributed to Southey's *Joan of Arc*, 1796, with certain additions, under the title "The Progress of Liberty; or, The Visions of the Maid of Orleans." Writing to Cottle Coleridge had said: "I much wish to send *My Visions of the Maid of Arc* and my corrections to Wordsworth . . . and to Lamb, whose taste and *judgment* I see reason to think more correct and philosophical than my own, which yet I place pretty high." Lamb's criticisms are contained in this letter. Coleridge abandoned his idea of including the poem in the 1797 edition, and the lines were not separately published until 1817, in *Sibylline Leaves*, under the title "The Destiny of Nations."

"Montauban . . . Roubigné." An illustration from Henry Mackenzie's novel *Julia de Roubigné*, 1777, from which Lamb took hints, a little later, for the structure of part of his story *Rosamund Gray*.

This is the passage in "Religious Musings" that Lamb particularly praises:—

> There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
> Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
> Truth of subliming import! with the which
> Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
> He from his small particular orbit flies
> With blest outstarting! From himself he flies,
> Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
> Views all creation; and he loves it all,
> And blesses it, and calls it very good!
> This is indeed to dwell with the Most High!
> Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
> Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne.

Southey's new volume, which Coleridge had noticed, was his *Poems*, second edition, Vol. I., 1797. The poem in question was "On My Own Miniature Picture taken at Two Years of Age."

Edward Fairfax's "Tasso" (*Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recoverie of Jerusalem*) was published in 1600. John Hoole, a later translator, became principal auditor at the India House, and resigned in 1786. He died in 1803.

Coleridge's dream was the poem called "The Raven."

Citizen John Thelwall (1764-1834), to whom many of Coleridge's early letters are written, was a Jacobin enthusiast who had gone

to the Tower with Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke in 1794, but was acquitted at his trial. At this time he was writing and lecturing on political subjects. When, in 1818, Thelwall acquired *The Champion* Lamb wrote squibs for it against the Regent and others.

Colson I have not identified. Probably Thomas Coulson, a friend of Sir Humphry Davy and the father of Walter Coulson (born ?1794) who was called "The Walking Encyclopædia," and was afterwards a friend of Hazlitt.

"To discipline your young noviciate soul." A line from "Religious Musings," 1796:—

I discipline my young noviciate thought.

"My poor old aunt." Lamb's lines on his Aunt Hetty repeat some of this praise; as also does the *Elia* essay on "Christ's Hospital."

"No after friendship e'er can raise . . ." Lamb quotes this on page 29—from Logan.

John Woolman (1720-1772), an American Quaker. His *Works* comprise *A Journal of the Life, Gospel, Labours, and Christian Experiences of that Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, John Woolman*, and *His Last Epistle and other Writings*. Lamb often praised the book.

"A London letter. 9½." A word on the postal system of those days may not be out of place. The cost of the letter when a frank had not been procured was borne by the recipient. The rate varied with the distance. The charge from London to Bridgewater in 1797 was sevenpence. Later it was raised to ninepence and tenpence. No regular post was set up between Bridgewater and Nether Stowey until 1808, when the cost of the carriage of a letter for the intervening nine miles was twopence.

"Ragged followers of the nine." From Burns' "Second Epistle to J. L*****k, an old Scotch Bard," verse xvi., line 2:—

The ragged followers o' the Nine.

"Flocci." See note on page 11.

"The Young Ass," early versions, ended thus:—

Soothe to rest
The tumult of some Scoundrel Monarch's breast.

Coleridge changed the last line to—

The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast.

Coleridge had asserted, in a 1796 note, that Rogers had taken the story of Florio in the *Pleasures of Memory* from Michael

Bruce's *Loch Leven* (not *Loch Lomond*). In the 1797 edition another note made apology for the mistake.

Cowper's "Lines on the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk" had been written in the spring of 1790. It is interesting to find Lamb reading them just now, for his own *Blank Verse* poems, shortly to be written, have much in common with Cowper's verses, not only in manner but in matter.]

LETTER 23

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Feb. 13th, 1797.

YOUR poem is altogether admirable—parts of it are even exquisite—in particular your personal account of the Maid far surpasses any thing of the sort in Southey. I perceived all its excellences, on a first reading, as readily as now you have been removing a supposed film from my eyes. I was only struck with [a] certain faulty disproportion in the matter and the *style*, which I still think I perceive, between these lines and the former ones. I had an end in view; I wished to make you reject the poem, only as being discordant with the other; and, in subservience to that end, it was politically done in me to over-pass, and make no mention of merit which, could you think me capable of *overlooking*, might reasonably damn for ever in your judgment all pretensions in me to be critical. There, I will be judged by Lloyd, whether I have not made a very handsome recantation. I was in the case of a man whose friend has asked him his opinion of a certain young lady; the deluded wight gives judgment against her *in toto*—don't like her face, her walk, her manners—finds fault with her eyebrows—can see no wit in her. His friend looks blank; he begins to smell a rat; wind veers about; he acknowledges her good sense, her judgment in dress, a certain simplicity of manners and honesty of heart, something too in her manners which gains upon you after a short acquaintance,—and then her accurate pronunciation of the French language and a pretty uncultivated taste in drawing. The reconciled gentleman smiles applause, squeezes him by the hand, and hopes he will do him the honour of taking a bit of dinner with Mrs. —— and him—a plain family dinner—some day next week. "For, I suppose, you never heard we were married! I'm glad to see you like my wife, however; you'll come and see her, ha?" Now am I too proud to retract entirely. Yet I do perceive I am in some sort straitened; you are manifestly wedded to this poem,

and what fancy has joined let no man separate. I turn me to the Joan of Arc, second book.

The solemn openings of it are with sounds which, Lloyd would say, "are silence to the mind." The deep preluding strains are fitted to initiate the mind, with a pleasing awe, into the sublimest mysteries of theory concerning man's nature and his noblest destination—the philosophy of a first cause—of subordinate agents in creation superior to man—the subserviency of Pagan worship and Pagan faith to the introduction of a purer and more perfect religion, which you so elegantly describe as winning with gradual steps her difficult way northward from Bethabra. After all this cometh Joan, a *publican's* daughter, sitting on an ale-house *bench*, and marking the *swingings* of the *signboard*, finding a poor man, his wife and six children, starved to death with cold, and thence roused into a state of mind proper to receive visions emblematical of equality; which what the devil Joan had to do with, I don't know, or indeed with the French and American revolutions; though that needs no pardon, it is executed so nobly. After all, if you perceive no disproportion, all argument is vain: I do not so much object to parts. Again, when you talk of building your fame on these lines in preference to the "Religious Musings," I cannot help conceiving of you and of the author of that as two different persons, and I think you a very vain man.

I have been re-reading your letter. Much of it I *could* dispute; but with the latter part of it, in which you compare the two Joans with respect to their predispositions for fanaticism, I *toto corde* coincide; only I think that Southey's strength rather lies in the description of the emotions of the Maid under the weight of inspiration,—these (I see no mighty difference between *her* describing them or *you* describing them), these if you only equal, the previous admirers of his poem, as is natural, will prefer his; if you surpass, prejudice will scarcely allow it, and I scarce think you will surpass, though your specimen at the conclusion (I am in earnest) I think very nigh equals them. And in an account of a fanatic or of a prophet the description of her *emotions* is expected to be most highly finished. By the way, I spoke far too disparagingly of your lines, and, I am ashamed to say, purposely. I should like you to specify or particularise; the story of the "Tottering Eld," of "his eventful years all come and gone," is too general; why not make him a soldier, or some character, however, in which he has been witness to frequency of "cruel wrong and strange distress!" I think I should. When I laughed at the "miserable man crawling from beneath the coverture," I wonder I [? you] did not perceive it was a laugh of horror—such as I have laughed at Dante's picture of the famished Ugolino. Without falsehood, I

perceive an hundred beauties in your narrative. Yet I wonder you do not perceive something out-of-the-way, something unsimple and artificial, in the expression, "voiced a sad tale." I hate made-dishes at the muses' banquet. I believe I was wrong in most of my other objections. But surely "hailed him immortal," adds nothing to the terror of the man's death, which it was your business to heighten, not diminish by a phrase which takes away all terror from it. I like that line, "They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death." Indeed, there is scarce a line I do not like. "*Turbid* ecstacy," is surely not so good as what you *had* written, "troublous." Turbid rather suits the muddy kind of inspiration which London porter confers. The versification is, throughout, to my ears unexceptionable, with no disparagement to the measure of the "Religious Musings," which is exactly fitted to the thoughts.

You were building your house on a rock, when you rested your fame on that poem. I can scarce bring myself to believe, that I am admitted to a familiar correspondence, and all the licence of friendship, with a man who writes blank verse like Milton. Now, this is delicate flattery, *indirect* flattery. Go on with your "Maid of Orleans," and be content to be second to yourself. I shall become a convert to it, when 'tis finished.

This afternoon I attend the funeral of my poor old aunt, who died on Thursday. I own I am thankful that the good creature has ended all her days of suffering and infirmity. She was to me the "cherisher of infancy," and one must fall on these occasions into reflections which it would be common-place to enumerate, concerning death, "of chance and change, and fate in human life." Good God, who could have foreseen all this but four months back! I had reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton before she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave, than one fresh dead. "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but let a man live many days and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many." Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence are gone, when all the life of life is fled, as poor Burns expresses it? Tell Lloyd I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, and have been reading, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's "No Cross, no Crown;" I like it immensely. Unluckily I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St. John Street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some "inevitable presence." This cured me of Quakerism; I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman, but I

detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the Spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling. In the midst of his inspiration—and the effects of it were most noisy—was handed into the midst of the meeting a most terrible blackguard Wapping sailor; the poor man, I believe, had rather have been in the hottest part of an engagement, for the congregation of broad-brims, together with the ravings of the prophet, were too much for his gravity, though I saw even he had delicacy enough not to laugh out. And the inspired gentleman, though his manner was so supernatural, yet neither talked nor professed to talk anything more than good sober sense, common morality, with now and then a declaration of not speaking from himself. Among other things, looking back to his childhood and early youth, he told the meeting what a graceless young dog he had been, that in his youth he had a good share of wit: reader, if thou hadst seen the gentleman, thou wouldst have sworn that it must indeed have been many years ago, for his rueful physiognomy would have scared away the playful goddess from the meeting, where he presided, for ever. A wit! a wit! what could he mean? Lloyd, it minded me of Falkland in the "Rivals," "Am I full of wit and humour? No, indeed you are not. Am I the life and soul of every company I come into? No, it cannot be said you are." That hard-faced gentleman, a wit! Why, Nature wrote on his fanatic forehead fifty years ago, "Wit never comes, that comes to all." I should be as scandalised at a *bon mot* issuing from his oracle-looking mouth, as to see Cato go down a country-dance. God love you all. You are very good to submit to be pleased with reading my nothings. 'Tis the privilege of friendship to talk nonsense, and to have her nonsense respected.—Yours ever,

C. Lamb.

Note

["Silence to the mind"—in Lloyd's "Lines on the Death of an Infant," in Coleridge's second edition, 1797. First called "Dirge occasioned by an Infant's Death" in Lloyd's *Poems on Various Subjects*, 1795.

"Dante's picture of the famished Ugolino." See the *Inferno*, Canto xxxiii.

Lamb's Aunt Hetty, Sarah Lamb, was buried at St. James's, Clerkenwell, on February 13, 1797.

"Cherisher of infancy." From Lloyd's first sonnet in his *Priscilla Farmer* volume (also, later, in Coleridge's *Poems*), line 13:—

I mourn the Cherisher of Infancy.

"Of chance and change, and fate in human life" (*Paradise Regained*, IV., 265, slightly altered).

"Truly the light is sweet." See Ecclesiastes xi. 7 and 8.

"As poor Burns expresses it." In the "Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn," 6th Stanza:—

> In weary being now I pine,
> For a' the life of life is dead,
> And hope has left my aged ken,
> On forward wing for ever fled.

"Turning Quaker." Lamb refers to the Peel meeting-house in John Street, Clerkenwell. Lamb afterwards used the story of the wit in the *Elia* essay "A Quaker's Meeting." In his invocation to the reader he here foreshadows his Elian manner.

"Inevitable presence." From Coleridge's "Destiny of Nations," line 264.

"Falkland" is in Sheridan's comedy "The Rivals" (see Act II., Scene 1).

"Wit never comes, that comes to all" (*Paradise Lost*, I., 66, 67, reading "Hope" for "Wit").]

LETTER 24

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

April 7th, 1797.

YOUR last letter was dated the 10th February; in it you promised to write again the next day. At least, I did not expect so long, so unfriend-like, a silence. There was a time, Col., when a remissness of this sort in a dear friend would have lain very heavy on my mind, but latterly I have been too familiar with neglect to feel much from the semblance of it. Yet, to suspect one's self overlooked and in the way to oblivion, is a feeling rather humbling; perhaps, as tending to self-mortification, not unfavourable to the spiritual state. Still, as you meant to confer no benefit on the soul of your friend, you do not stand quite clear from the imputation of unkindliness (a word by which I mean the diminutive of unkindness). Lloyd tells me he has been very ill, and was on the point of leaving you. I addressed a letter to him at Birmingham: perhaps he got it not, and is still with you. I hope his ill-health has not prevented his attending to a request I made in it, that he would write again very soon to let me know how he was. I hope to God poor Lloyd is not very bad, or in a very bad way. Pray satisfy me about these things. And then David Hartley was unwell; and how is the small philosopher, the

minute philosopher? and David's mother? Coleridge, I am not trifling, nor are these matter-of-fact [? course] questions only. You are all very dear and precious to me; do what you will, Col., you may hurt me and vex me by your silence, but you cannot estrange my heart from you all. I cannot scatter friendship[s] like chuck-farthings, nor let them drop from mine hand like hour-glass sand. I have two or three people in the world to whom I am more than indifferent, and I can't afford to whistle them off to the winds.

By the way, Lloyd may have told you about my sister. I told him. If not, I have taken her out of her confinement, and taken a room for her at Hackney, and spend my Sundays, holidays, &c., with her. She boards herself. In one little half year's illness, and in such an illness of such a nature and of such consequences! to get her out into the world again, with a prospect of her never being so ill again—this is to be ranked not among the common blessings of Providence. May that merciful God make tender my heart, and make me as thankful, as in my distress I was earnest, in my prayers. Congratulate me on an ever-present and never-alienable friend like her. And do, do insert, if you have not *lost*, my dedication. It will have lost half its value by coming so late. If you really are going on with that volume, I shall be enabled in a day or two to send you a short poem to insert. Now, do answer this. Friendship, and acts of friendship, should be reciprocal, and free as the air; a friend should never be reduced to beg an alms of his fellow. Yet I will beg an alms; I entreat you to write, and tell me all about poor Lloyd, and all of you. God love and preserve you all.

C. Lamb.

Note

[Lloyd's domestication with Coleridge had been intermittent. It began in September, 1796; in November Lloyd was very ill; in December Coleridge told Mr. Lloyd that he would retain his son no longer as pupil but merely as a lodger and friend; at Christmas Charles Lloyd was at Birmingham; in January he was in London; in March he was ill again and his experiment with Coleridge ended.

"The minute philosopher." A joking reference to Bishop Berkeley's *Alciphron; or, The Minute Philosopher.*

"Whistle them off." See "Othello," III., 3, 262:—

> I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind.

For the dedication to which Lamb refers see page 58.]

LETTER 25

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

April 15th, 1797.

A VISION OF REPENTANCE

I SAW a famous fountain in my dream,
Where shady pathways to a valley led;
A weeping willow lay upon that stream,
And all around the fountain brink were spread
Wide branching trees, with dark green leaf rich clad,
Forming a doubtful twilight desolate and sad.

The place was such, that whoso enter'd in
Disrobed was of every earthly thought,
And straight became as one that knew not sin,
Or to the world's first innocence was brought;
Enseem'd it now, he stood on holy ground,
In sweet and tender melancholy wrapt around.

A most strange calm stole o'er my soothed sprite;
Long time I stood, and longer had I staid,
When lo! I saw, saw by the sweet moonlight,
Which came in silence o'er that silent shade,
Where near the fountain SOMETHING like DESPAIR
Made of that weeping willow garlands for her hair.

And eke with painful fingers she inwove
Many an uncouth stem of savage thorn—
"The willow garland, *that* was for her Love,
And *these* her bleeding temples would adorn."
With sighs her heart nigh burst—salt tears fast fell,
As mournfully she bended o'er that sacred well.

To whom when I addrest myself to speak,
She lifted up her eyes, and nothing said;
The delicate red came mantling o'er her cheek,
And gathering up her loose attire, she fled
To the dark covert of that woody shade
And in her goings seem'd a timid gentle maid.

Revolving in my mind what this should mean,
And why that lovely Lady plained so;
Perplex'd in thought at that mysterious scene,
And doubting if 'twere best to stay or go,
I cast mine eyes in wistful gaze around,
When from the shades came slow a small and plaintive sound:

"PSYCHE am I, who love to dwell
In these brown shades, this woody dell,
Where never busy mortal came,
Till now, to pry upon my shame.

"At thy feet what thou dost see
The Waters of Repentance be,
Which, night and day, I must augment
With tears, like a true penitent,

If haply so my day of grace
Be not yet past; and this lone place,
O'er-shadowy, dark, excludeth hence
All thoughts but grief and penitence."

"*Why dost thou weep, thou gentle maid!*
And wherefore in this barren shade
Thy hidden thoughts with sorrow feed?
Can thing so fair repentance need?"

"O! I have done a deed of shame,
And tainted is my virgin fame,
And stain'd the beauteous maiden white
In which my bridal robes were dight."

"*And who the promis'd spouse declare,*
And what those bridal garments were?"

"Severe and saintly righteousness
Compos'd the clear white bridal dress;
JESUS, the son of Heaven's high King
Bought with his blood the marriage ring.

"A wretched sinful creature, I
Deem'd lightly of that sacred tye,
Gave to a treacherous WORLD my heart,
And play'd the foolish wanton's part.

"Soon to these murky shades I came
To hide from the Sun's light my shame—
And still I haunt this woody dell,
And bathe me in that healing well,
Whose waters clear have influence
From sin's foul stains the soul to cleanse;
And night and day I them augment
With tears, like a true Penitent,
Until, due expiation made,
And fit atonement fully paid,
The Lord and Bridegroom me present
Where in sweet strains of high consent,
God's throne before, the Seraphim
Shall chaunt the extatic marriage hymn."

"*Now Christ restore thee soon*"—I said,
And thenceforth all my dream was fled.

The above you will please to print immediately before the blank verse fragments. Tell me if you like it. I fear the latter half is unequal to the former, in parts of which I think you will discover a delicacy of pencilling not quite un-Spenser-like. The latter half aims at the *measure*, but has failed to attain the *poetry*, of Milton in his "Comus" and Fletcher in that exquisite thing ycleped the "Faithful Shepherdess," where they both use eight-syllable lines. But this latter half was finished in great haste, and as a task, not from that impulse which affects the name of inspiration.

By the way, I have lit upon Fairfax's "Godfrey of Bullen" for half-a-crown. Rejoice with me.

Poor dear Lloyd! I had a letter from him yesterday; his state of mind is truly alarming. He has, by his own confession, kept a letter of mine unopened three weeks, afraid, he says, to open it, lest I should speak upbraidingly to him; and yet this very letter of mine was in answer to one, wherein he informed me that an alarming illness had alone prevented him from writing. You will pray with me, I know, for his recovery; for surely, Coleridge, an exquisiteness of feeling like this must border on derangement. But I love him more and more, and will not give up the hope of his speedy recovery, as he tells me he is under Dr. Darwin's regimen.

God bless us all, and shield us from insanity, which is "the sorest malady of all."

My kind love to your wife and child.

C. LAMB.

Pray write, now.

NOTE

[I have placed the poem at the head from the text of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797, where it was relegated to the Appendix; but the version of the letter very likely differed (see next letter for at least one alteration).

Fairfax's *Godfrey of Bullen* was his translation of Tasso, which is mentioned on page 93.

Lloyd, who was undergoing one of those attacks of acute melancholia to which he was subject all his life, had been sent to Lichfield, where Erasmus Darwin had established a sanatorium.

"The sorest malady of all." From Lamb's lines to Cowper (see page 37).]

LETTER 26

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Tuesday,] June 13th, 1797.

I STARED with wild wonderment to see thy well-known hand again. It revived many a pleasing recollection of an epistolary intercourse, of late strangely suspended, once the pride of my life. Before I even opened thy letter, I figured to myself a sort of complacency which my little hoard at home would feel at receiving the new-comer into the little drawer where I keep my treasures of this kind. You have done well in writing to me. The little room (was it not a little one?) at the Salutation was already in the way of becoming a fading idea! it had begun to be classed in my memory

with those "wanderings with a fair hair'd maid," in the recollection of which I feel I have no property. You press me, very kindly do you press me, to come to Stowey; obstacles, strong as death, prevent me at present; maybe I shall be able to come before the year is out; believe me, I will come as soon as I can, but I dread naming a probable time. It depends on fifty things, besides the expense, which is not nothing. Lloyd wants me to come and see him; but, besides that you have a prior claim on me, I should not feel myself so much at home with him, till he gets a house of his own. As to Richardson, caprice may grant what caprice only refused, and it is no more hardship, rightly considered, to be dependent on him for pleasure, than to lie at the mercy of the rain and sunshine for the enjoyment of a holiday: in either case we are not to look for a suspension of the laws of nature. "Grill will be Grill." Vide Spenser.

I could not but smile at the compromise you make with me for printing Lloyd's poems first; but there is [are] in nature, I fear, too many tendencies to envy and jealousy not to justify you in your apology. Yet, if any one is welcome to pre-eminence from me, it is Lloyd, for he would be the last to desire it. So pray, let his name *uniformly* precede mine, for it would be treating me like a child to suppose it could give me pain. Yet, alas! I am not insusceptible of the bad passions. Thank God, I have the ingenuousness to be ashamed of them. I am dearly fond of Charles Lloyd; he is all goodness, and I have too much of the world in my composition to feel myself thoroughly deserving of his friendship.

Lloyd tells me that Sheridan put you upon writing your tragedy. I hope you are only Coleridgeizing when you talk of finishing it in a few days. Shakspeare was a more modest man; but you best know your own power.

Of my last poem you speak slightingly; surely the longer stanzas were pretty tolerable; at least there was one good line in it,

"Thick-shaded trees, with dark green leaf rich clad."

To adopt your own expression, I call this a "rich" line, a fine full line. And some others I thought even beautiful. Believe me, my little gentleman will feel some repugnance at riding behind in the basket; though, I confess, in pretty good company. Your picture of idiocy, with the sugar-loaf head, is exquisite; but are you not too severe upon our more favoured brethren in fatuity? Lloyd tells me how ill your wife and child have been. I rejoice that they are better. My kindest remembrances and those of my sister. I send you a trifling letter; but you have only to think

that I have been skimming the superficies of my mind, and found it only froth. Now, do write again; you cannot believe how I long and love always to hear about you. Yours, most affectionately,

CHARLES LAMB.

Monday Night.

NOTE

["Little drawer where I keep . . ." Lamb soon lost the habit of keeping any letters, except Manning's.

"Wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid." Lamb's own line. See sonnet quoted on page 24.

Lamb's visit to Stowey was made in July, as we shall see.

"Grill will be Grill." See the *Faerie Queene*, Book II., Canto 12, Stanzas 86 and 87. "Let Gryll be Gryll" is the right text.

Lloyd had joined the poetical partnership, and his poems were to precede Lamb's in the 1797 volume. "Lloyd's connections," Coleridge had written to Cottle, "will take off a great many [copies], more than a hundred."

Coleridge's tragedy was "Osorio," of which we hear first in March, 1797, when Coleridge tells Cottle that Sheridan has asked him to write a play for Drury Lane. It was finished in October, and rejected. In 1813, much altered, it was performed under its new title, "Remorse," and published in book form. Lamb wrote the Prologue.

The "last poem" of which Lamb speaks was "The Vision of Repentance." The good line was altered to—

Wide branching trees, with dark green leaf rich clad,

when the poem appeared in the Appendix ("the basket," as Lamb calls it) of the 1797 volume.

"Your picture of idiocy." Compare S. T. Coleridge to Thomas Poole, dated "Greta Hall, Oct. 5, 1801" (*Thomas Poole and His Friends*): "We passed a poor ideot boy, who exactly answered my description; he

'Stood in the sun, rocking his sugar-loaf head,
And staring at a bough from morn to sunset,
See-sawed his voice in inarticulate noises.'"

See this passage, much altered, in "Remorse," II., 1, 186-191. The lines do not occur in "Osorio," yet they, or something like them, must have been copied out by Coleridge for Lamb in June, 1797.]

LETTER 27

(Possibly only a fragment)

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Saturday,] June 24th, 1797.

DID you seize the grand opportunity of seeing Kosciusko while he was at Bristol? I never saw a hero; I wonder how they look. I have been reading a most curious romance-like work, called the "Life of John Buncle, Esq." 'Tis very interesting, and an extraordinary compound of all manner of subjects, from the depth of the ludicrous to the heights of sublime religious truth. There is much abstruse science in it above my cut and an infinite fund of pleasantry. John Buncle is a famous fine man, formed in nature's most eccentric hour. I am ashamed of what I write. But I have no topic to talk of. I see nobody, and sit, and read or walk, alone, and hear nothing. I am quite lost to conversation from disuse; and out of the sphere of my little family, who, I am thankful, are dearer and dearer to me every day, I see no face that brightens up at my approach. My friends are at a distance; worldly hopes are at a low ebb with me, and unworldly thoughts are not yet familiarised to me, though I occasionally indulge in them. Still I feel a calm not unlike content. I fear it is sometimes more akin to physical stupidity than to a heaven-flowing serenity and peace. What right have I to obtrude all this upon you? what is such a letter to you? and if I come to Stowey, what conversation can I furnish to compensate my friend for those stores of knowledge and of fancy, those delightful treasures of wisdom, which I know he will open to me? But it is better to give than to receive; and I was a very patient hearer and docile scholar in our winter evening meetings at Mr. May's; was I not, Col.? What I have owed to thee, my heart can ne'er forget.

God love you and yours.

C. L.

Saturday.

Note

[Thaddeus Kosciusko (1746-1817), the Polish patriot, to whom Coleridge had a sonnet in his *Poems*, 1796, visited England and America after being liberated from prison on the accession of Paul I., and settled in France in 1798.

The Life of John Buncle, Esq., a book which Lamb (and also Hazlitt) frequently praised, is a curious digressive novel, part religious, part roystering, and wholly eccentric and individual, by Thomas Amory, published, Vol. I., in 1756, and Vol. II., in 1766.

"Mr. May's." See note on page 8.

"What I have owed to thee . . ." These words are a quotation—the last line of Bowles' sonnet "Oxford Revisited."]

LETTER 28

(*Possibly only a fragment*)

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date. ? June 29, 1797.]

I DISCERN a possibility of my paying you a visit next week. May I, can I, shall I, come so soon? Have you *room* for me, *leisure* for me, and are you all pretty well? Tell me all this honestly —immediately. And by what *day*-coach could I come soonest and nearest to Stowey? A few months hence may suit you better; certainly me as well. If so, say so. I long, I yearn, with all the longings of a child do I desire to see you, to come among you—to see the young philosopher, to thank Sara for her last year's invitation in person—to read your tragedy—to read over together our little book—to breathe fresh air—to revive in me vivid images of "Salutation scenery." There is a sort of sacrilege in my letting such ideas slip out of my mind and memory. Still that knave Richardson remaineth—a thorn in the side of Hope, when she would lean towards Stowey. Here I will leave off, for I dislike to fill up this paper, which involves a question so connected with my heart and soul, with meaner matter or subjects to me less interesting. I can talk, as I can think, nothing else.

C. LAMB.

Thursday.

NOTE

["Our little book." Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition.

"Salutation scenery." See note on pages 3 and 4.

"Richardson." See note on page 35.]

LETTER 29

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date. Probably July 19 or 26, 1797.]

I AM scarcely yet so reconciled to the loss of you, or so subsided into my wonted uniformity of feeling, as to sit calmly down to think of you and write to you. But I reason myself into the belief that those few and pleasant holidays shall not have been spent in vain. I feel improvement in the recollection of many a casual conversation. The names of Tom Poole, of Wordsworth and his good sister, with thine and Sara's, are become "familiar in my mouth as household words." You would make me very happy, if you think W. has no objection, by transcribing for me that inscription of his. I have some scattered sentences ever floating on my memory, teasing me that I cannot remember more of it. You may believe I will make no improper use of it. Believe me I can think now of many subjects on which I had planned gaining information from you; but I forgot my "treasure's worth" while I possessed it. Your leg is now become to me a matter of much more importance—and many a little thing, which when I was present with you seemed scarce to *indent* my notice, now presses painfully on my remembrance. Is the Patriot come yet? Are Wordsworth and his sister gone yet? I was looking out for John Thelwall all the way from Bridgewater, and had I met him, I think it would have moved almost me to tears. You will oblige me too by sending me my great-coat, which I left behind in the oblivious state the mind is thrown into at parting—is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great-coat lingering so cunningly behind?—at present I have none—so send it me by a Stowey waggon, if there be such a thing, directing for C. L., No. 45, Chapel-Street, Pentonville, near London. But above all, *that Inscription!*—it will recall to me the tones of all your voices—and with them many a remembered kindness to one who could and can repay you all only by the silence of a grateful heart. I could not talk much, while I was with you, but my silence was not sullenness, nor I hope from any bad motive; but, in truth, disuse has made me awkward at it. I know I behaved myself, particularly at Tom Poole's, and at Cruikshank's, most like a sulky child; but company and converse are strange to me. It was kind in you all to endure me as you did.

Are you and your dear Sara—to me also very dear, because very kind—agreed yet about the management of little Hartley? and

how go on the little rogue's teeth? I will see White to-morrow, and he shall send you information on that matter; but as perhaps I can do it as well after talking with him, I will keep this letter open.

My love and thanks to you and all of you.

C. L.

Wednesday Evening.

NOTE

[Lamb spent a week at Nether Stowey in July, 1797. Coleridge tells Southey of this visit in a letter written in that month: "Charles Lamb has been with me for a week. He left me Friday morning. The second day after Wordsworth [who had just left Racedown, near Crewkerne, for Alfoxden, near Stowey] came to me, dear Sara accidentally emptied a skillet of boiling milk on my foot, which confined me during the whole time of C. Lamb's stay and still prevents me from all walks longer than a furlong." This is the cause of Lamb's allusion to Coleridge's leg, and it also produced Coleridge's poem beginning "This lime-tree bower my prison," addressed to Lamb, which opens as follows, the friends in the fourth line being Lamb, Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth. (Wordsworth was then twenty-seven. The *Lyrical Ballads* were to be written in the next few months.)

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
Lam'd by the scathe of fire, lonely and faint,
This lime-tree bower my prison! They, meantime
My Friends, whom I may never meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge
Wander delighted, and look down, perchance,
On that same rifted Dell, where many an ash
Twists its wild limbs beside the ferny rock
Whose plumy ferns forever nod and drip,
Spray'd by the waterfall. But chiefly thou
My gentle-hearted *Charles!* thou who had pin'd
And hunger'd after Nature many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet bowed soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity!

Tom Poole was Thomas Poole (1765-1837), a wealthy tanner, and Coleridge's friend, correspondent and patron, who lived at Stowey.

"Familiar in my mouth as household words" ("Henry V.," IV., 3, 52).

"Treasure's worth." I do not trace this quotation.

The Patriot and John Thelwall were one. See note on page 93.

"That inscription." The "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree," written in 1795. Lamb refers to it again in 1815. Letter 206, pages 457, 459.

The address at Pentonville is the first indication given by Lamb that he has left Little Queen Street. We last saw him there for certain in Letter 17 on December 9. The removal had been made probably at the end of 1796.

John Cruikshank, a neighbour of Coleridge, had married a Miss Budé on the same day that Coleridge married Sara Fricker.

Of the business connected with White we know nothing.]

LETTER 30

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. August 24, 1797.]

POOR Charles Lloyd came to me about a fortnight ago. He took the opportunity of Mr. Hawkes coming to London, and I think at his request, to come with him. It seemed to me, and he acknowledged it, that he had come to gain a little time and a little peace, before he made up his mind. He was a good deal perplexed what to do—wishing earnestly that he had never entered into engagements which he felt himself unable to fulfill, but which on Sophia's account he could not bring himself to relinquish. I could give him little advice or comfort, and feeling my own inability painfully, eagerly snatched at a proposal he made me to go to Southey's with him for a day or two. He then meant to return with me, who could stay only one night. While there, he at one time thought of going to consult you, but changed his intention and stayed behind with Southey, and wrote an explicit letter to Sophia. I came away on the Tuesday, and on the Saturday following, *last Saturday*, receiv'd a letter dated Bath, in which he said he was on his way to Birmingham,—that Southey was accompanying him,—and that he went for the purpose of persuading Sophia to a Scotch marriage—

I greatly feared, that she would never consent to this, from what Lloyd had told me of her character. But waited most anxiously the result. Since then I have not had one letter. For God's sake, if you get any intelligence of or from Chas Lloyd, communicate it, for I am much alarmed.

C. LAMB.

I wrote to Burnett what I write now to you,—was it from him you heard, or elsewhere?—

He said if he *had* come to you, he could never have brought himself to leave you. In all his distress he was sweetly and

exemplarily calm and master of himself,—and seemed perfectly free from his disorder.—

How do you all at?

NOTE

[This letter is unimportant, except in showing Lamb's power of sharing his friends' troubles. Charles Lloyd was not married to Sophia Pemberton, of Birmingham, until 1799; nothing rash being done, as Lamb seems to think possible. The reference to Southey, who was at this time living at Burton, in Hampshire, throws some light on De Quincey's statement, in his "Autobiography," that owing to the objection of Miss Pemberton's parents to the match, Lloyd secured the assistance of Southey to carry the lady off.

Burnett would be George Burnett (1776?-1811), one of Coleridge's fellow Pantisocratists, whom we shall meet later.

The "he" of the second postscript is not Burnett, but Lloyd.]

LETTER 31

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[About September 20, 1797.]

WRITTEN A TWELVEMONTH AFTER THE EVENTS

[*Friday next, Coleridge, is the day on which my mother died.*]

ALAS! how am I changed! where be the tears,
The sobs and forced suspensions of the breath,
And all the dull desertions of the heart
With which I hung o'er my dear mother's corse?
Where be the blest subsidings of the storm
Within; the sweet resignedness of hope
Drawn heavenward, and strength of filial love,
In which I bow'd me to my Father's will?
My God and my Redeemer, keep not thou
My heart in brute and sensual thanklessness
Seal'd up, oblivious ever of that dear grace,
And health restor'd to my long-loved friend.
Long loved, and worthy known! Thou didst not keep
Her soul in death. O keep not now, my Lord,
Thy servants in far worse—in spiritual death
And darkness—blacker than those feared shadows
O' the valley all must tread. Lend us thy balms,
Thou dear Physician of the sin-sick soul,
And heal our cleansed bosoms of the wounds
With which the world hath pierc'd us thro' and thro'!
Give us new flesh, new birth; Elect of heaven

May we become, in thine election sure
Contain'd, and to one purpose steadfast drawn—
Our souls' salvation.
Thou and I, dear friend,
With filial recognition sweet, shall know
One day the face of our dear mother in heaven,
And her remember'd looks of love shall greet
With answering looks of love, her placid smiles
Meet with a smile as placid, and her hand
With drops of fondness wet, nor fear repulse.

Be witness for me, Lord, I do not ask
Those days of vanity to return again,
(Nor fitting me to ask, nor thee to give),
Vain loves, and "wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid;"
(Child of the dust as I am), who so long
My foolish heart steep'd in idolatry,
And creature-loves. Forgive it, O my Maker!
If in a mood of grief, I sin almost
In sometimes brooding on the days long past,
(And from the grave of time wishing them back),
Days of a mother's fondness to her child—
Her little one! Oh, where be now those sports
And infant play-games? Where the joyous troops
Of children, and the haunts I did so love?
O my companions! O ye loved names
Of friend, or playmate dear, gone are ye now.
Gone divers ways; to honour and credit some:
And some, I fear, to ignominy and shame!
I only am left, with unavailing grief
One parent dead to mourn, and see one live
Of all life's joys bereft, and desolate:
Am left, with a few friends, and one above
The rest, found faithful in a length of years,
Contented as I may, to bear me on,
T' the not unpeaceful evening of a day
Made black by morning storms.

The following I wrote when I had returned from C. Lloyd, leaving him behind at Burton with Southey. To understand some of it, you must remember that at that time he was very much perplexed in mind.

A stranger and alone, I past those scenes
We past so late together; and my heart
Felt something like desertion, as I look'd
Around me, and the pleasant voice of friend
Was absent, and the cordial look was there
No more, to smile on me. I thought on Lloyd—
All he had been to me! And now I go
Again to mingle with a world impure;
With men who make a mock of holy things,
Mistaken, and of man's best hope think scorn.
The world does much to warp the heart of man;
And I may sometimes join its idiot laugh:
Of this I now complain not. Deal with me,
Omniscient Father, as Thou judgest best,
And in *Thy* season soften thou my heart.

I pray not for myself: I pray for him
Whose soul is sore perplexed. Shine thou on him,
Father of Lights! and in the difficult paths
Make plain his way before him: his own thoughts
May he not think—his own ends not pursue—
So shall he best perform Thy will on earth.
Greatest and Best, Thy will be ever ours!

The former of these poems I wrote with unusual celerity t'other morning at office. I expect you to like it better than anything of mine; Lloyd does, and I do myself.

You use Lloyd very ill, never writing to him. I tell you again that his is not a mind with which you should play tricks. He deserves more tenderness from you.

For myself, I must spoil a little passage of Beaumont and Fletcher to adapt it to my feelings:—

"I am prouder
That I was once your friend, tho' now forgot,
Than to have had another true to me."

If you don't write to me now, as I told Lloyd, I shall get angry, and call you hard names—Manchineel and I don't know what else. I wish you would send me my great-coat. The snow and the rain season is at hand, and I have but a wretched old coat, once my father's, to keep 'em off, and that is transitory.

"When time drives flocks from field to fold,
When ways grow foul and blood gets cold,"

I shall remember where I left my coat. Meet emblem wilt thou be, old Winter, of a friend's neglect—cold, cold, cold! Remembrance where remembrance is due.

C. Lamb.

Note

[The two poems included in this letter were printed in *Blank Verse*, a volume which Lamb and Lloyd issued in 1798.

Coleridge had written to Lloyd, we know, as late as July, because he sent him a version of the poem, "This Lime-tree Bower, my Prison;" but a coolness that was to ripen into positive hostility had already begun. Of this we shall see more later.

The passage from Beaumont and Fletcher is in "The Maid's Tragedy" (Act II., Scene 1), where Aspatia says to Amintor:—

Thus I wind myself
Into this willow garland, and am prouder
That I was once your love (though now refus'd)
Than to have had another true to me.

The scene is in Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens*.

The reference to Manchineel is explained by a passage in Coleridge's dedication of his 1797 volume, then just published, to his brother, the Rev. George Coleridge, where, speaking of the friends he had known, he says:—

> and some most false,
> False and fair-foliag'd as the Manchineel,
> Have tempted me to slumber in their shade

—the manchineel being a poisonous West Indian tree.

"When time drives flocks . . ." This couplet seems to have been ingeniously compiled by Lamb from two sources. The first line is in Raleigh's "Nymph's Reply to the Passionate Shepherd":—

> But Time drives flocks from field to fold.

The second line is probably a compact version of the third stanza in the song at the end of "Love's Labour's Lost":—

> When icicles hang by the wall,
> And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
> And Tom bears logs into the hall,
> And milk comes frozen home in pail,
> *When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,*
> Then nightly sings the staring owl.

Between this and the next letter probably came correspondence that has now been lost.]

LETTER 32

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

January 28th, 1798.

YOU have writ me many kind letters, and I have answered none of them. I don't deserve your attentions. An unnatural indifference has been creeping on me since my last misfortunes, or I should have seized the first opening of a correspondence with *you*. To you I owe much under God. In my brief acquaintance with you in London, your conversations won me to the better cause, and rescued me from the polluting spirit of the world. I might have been a worthless character without you; as it is, I do possess a certain improvable portion of devotional feelings, tho' when I view myself in the light of divine truth, and not according to the common measures of human judgment, I am altogether corrupt and sinful. This is no cant. I am very sincere.

These last afflictions, Coleridge, have failed to soften and bend my will. They found me unprepared. My former calamities

produced in me a spirit of humility and a spirit of prayer. I thought they had sufficiently disciplined me; but the event ought to humble me. If God's judgments now fail to take away from me the heart of stone, what more grievous trials ought I not to expect? I have been very querulous, impatient under the rod —full of little jealousies and heartburnings.—I had well nigh quarrelled with Charles Lloyd; and for no other reason, I believe, than that the good creature did all he could to make me happy. The truth is, I thought he tried to force my mind from its natural and proper bent; he continually wished me to be from home; he was drawing me *from* the consideration of my poor dear Mary's situation, rather than assisting me to gain a proper view of it with religious consolations. I wanted to be left to the tendency of my own mind in a solitary state which, in times past, I knew had led to quietness and a patient bearing of the yoke. He was hurt that I was not more constantly with him; but he was living with White, a man to whom I had never been accustomed to impart my *dearest feelings*, tho' from long habits of friendliness, and many a social and good quality, I loved him very much. I met company there sometimes—indiscriminate company. Any society almost, when I am in affliction, is sorely painful to me. I seem to breathe more freely, to think more collectedly, to feel more properly and calmly, when alone. All these things the good creature did with the kindest intentions in the world, but they produced in me nothing but soreness and discontent. I became, as he complained, "jaundiced" towards him . . . but he has forgiven me—and his smile, I hope, will draw all such humours from me. I am recovering, God be praised for it, a healthiness of mind, something like calmness—but I want more religion—I am jealous of human helps and leaning-places. I rejoice in your good fortunes. May God at the last settle you!—You have had many and painful trials; humanly speaking they are going to end; but we should rather pray that discipline may attend us thro' the whole of our lives. . . . A careless and a dissolute spirit has advanced upon *me* with large strides—pray God that my present afflictions may be sanctified to me! Mary is recovering, but I see no opening yet of a situation for her; your invitation went to my very heart, but you have a power of exciting interest, of leading all hearts captive, too forcible to admit of Mary's being with you. I consider her as perpetually on the brink of madness. I think you would almost make her dance within an inch of the precipice: she must be with duller fancies and cooler intellects. I know a young man of this description, who has suited her these twenty years, and may live to do so still, if we are one day restored to each other. In answer to your suggestions of occupation for

me, I must say that I do not think my capacity altogether suited for disquisitions of that kind. . . . I have read little, I have a very weak memory, and retain little of what I read; am unused to composition in which any methodising is required; but I thank you sincerely for the hint, and shall receive it as far as I am able: that is, endeavour to engage my mind in some constant and innocent pursuit. I know my capacities better than you do.

Accept my kindest love, and believe me yours, as ever.

C. L.

NOTE

[The first letter that has been preserved since September of the previous year. In the meantime Lamb had begun to work on *Rosamund Gray*, probably upon an impulse gained from the visit to Stowey, and was also arranging to join Lloyd, who was living in London with White, in the volume of poems to be called *Blank Verse*. Southey, writing many years later to Edward Moxon, said of Lloyd and White: "No two men could be imagined more unlike each other; Lloyd had no drollery in his nature; White seemed to have nothing else. You will easily understand how Lamb could sympathise with both."

The new calamity to which Lamb refers in this letter was probably a relapse in Mary Lamb's condition. When he last mentioned her she was so far better as to be able to be moved into lodgings at Hackney: all that good was now undone. Coleridge seems to have suggested that she should visit Stowey.

It was about this time that Lamb wrote the poem "The Old Familiar Faces," which I quote below in its original form, afterwards changed by the omission of the first four lines:—

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?

I had a mother, but she died, and left me,
Died prematurely in a day of horrors—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women.
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man.
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood.
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother!
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces.

For some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

January, 1798.

It is conjectured by Mr. J. A. Rutter, and there is much reason to believe it a right theory, especially when taken into connection with the present letter, that Lloyd was the friend of the fifth stanza and Coleridge the friend of the seventh. The italicised half line might refer to "Anna," but, since she is mentioned in the fourth stanza, it more probably, I think, refers to Mary Lamb, who, as we have seen, had been so ill as to necessitate removal from Hackney into more special confinement again. (This, however, is largely conjecture.)

The letter was addressed to Coleridge at the Reverend A. Rowe's, Shrewsbury. Coleridge had been offered the Unitarian pulpit at Shrewsbury and was on the point of accepting when he received news of the annuity of £150 which Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood had settled upon him.

Between this letter and the next certainly came other letters to Coleridge, now lost, one of which is referred to by Coleridge in the letter to Lamb quoted below.]

LETTER 33

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date. Early Summer, 1798.]

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ

1. WHETHER God loves a lying Angel better than a true Man?

2. Whether the Archangel Uriel *could* affirm an untruth? and if he *could* whether he *would*?

[Spring of 1798.]

DEAR LAMB,—Lloyd has informed me through Miss Wordsworth that you intend no longer to correspond with me. This has given me little pain; not that I do not love and esteem you, but on the contrary because I am confident that your intentions are pure. You are performing what you deem a duty, and humanly speaking have that merit which can be derived from the performance of a painful duty. Painful, for you would not without struggles abandon me in behalf of a man [Lloyd] who, wholly ignorant of all but your name, became attached to you in consequence of my attachment, caught *his* from *my* enthusiasm, and learned to love you at my fireside, when often while I have been sitting and talking of your sorrows and afflictions I have stopped my conversations and lifted up wet eyes and prayed for you. No! I am confident that although you do not think as a wise man, you feel as a good man.

From you I have received little pain, because for you I suffer little alarm. I cannot say this for your friend; it appears to me evident that his feelings are vitiated, and that his ideas are in their combination merely the creatures of those feelings. I have received letters from him, and the best and kindest wish which, as a Christian, I can offer in return is that he may feel remorse. . . .

When I wrote to you that my Sonnet to Simplicity was not composed with reference to Southey, you answered me (I believe these were the words): "It was a lie too gross for the grossest ignorance to believe;" and I was not angry with you, because the assertion which the grossest ignorance would believe a lie the Omniscient knew to be truth. This, however, makes me cautious not too hastily to affirm the falsehood of an assertion of Lloyd's that in Edmund Oliver's love-fit, leaving college, and going into the army he had no sort of allusion to or recollection of my love-fit, leaving college, and going into the army, and that he never thought of my person in the description of Oliver's person in the first letter of the second volume. This cannot appear stranger to me than my assertion did to you, and therefore I will suspend my absolute faith. . . .

I have been unfortunate in my connections. Both you and Lloyd became acquainted with me when your minds were far from being in a composed or natural state, and you clothed my image with a suit of notions and feelings which could belong to nothing human. You are restored to comparative saneness, and are merely wondering what is become of the Coleridge with whom you were so passionately in love; *Charles Lloyd's* mind has only changed his disease, and he is now arraying his ci-devant Angel in a flaming San Benito—the whole ground of the garment a dark brimstone and plenty of little

devils flourished out in black. Oh, me! Lamb, "even in laughter the heart is sad!" . . .

God bless you and S. T. Coleridge.

One other passage. In a letter from Lloyd at Birmingham to Cottle, dated June, 1798, Lloyd says, in response to Cottle's suggestion that he should visit Coleridge, "I love Coleridge, and can forget all that has happened. At present I could not well go to Stowey. . . . Lamb quitted me yesterday, after a fortnight's visit. I have been much interested in his society. I never knew him so happy in my life. I shall write to Coleridge to-day." Coleridge left for Germany in September.

"Schiller and swing in a wood." An allusion to Coleridge's sonnet to Schiller:—

> Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
> Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood
> Wand'ring at eve with finely-frenzied eye
> Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!

Here should perhaps come Lamb's first letter to Robert Lloyd, not available for this edition, but printed by Canon Ainger, and in *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*, where it is dated October. Lamb's first letter is one of advice, apparently in reply to some complaints of his position addressed to him by Lloyd. A second and longer letter which, though belonging to August, 1798, may be mentioned here, also counsels, commending the use of patience and humility. Lamb is here seen in the character of a spiritual adviser. The letter is unique in his correspondence.

Robert Lloyd was a younger brother of Charles Lloyd, and Lamb had probably met him when on his visit to Birmingham in the summer. The boy, then not quite twenty, was apprenticed to a Quaker draper at Saffron Walden in Essex.]

LETTER 34

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Saturday, July 28th, 1798.

I AM ashamed that I have not thanked you before this for the "Joan of Arc," but I did not know your address, and it did not occur to me to write through Cottle. The poem delighted me, and the notes amused me, but methinks she of Neufchatel, in the print, holds her sword too "like a dancer." I sent your *notice* to Phillips, particularly requesting an immediate

insertion, but I suppose it came too late. I am sometimes curious to know what progress you make in that same "Calendar:" whether you insert the nine worthies and Whittington? what you do or how you can manage when two Saints meet and quarrel for precedency? Martlemas, and Candlemas, and Christmas, are glorious themes for a writer like you, antiquity-bitten, smit with the love of boars' heads and rosemary; but how you can ennoble the 1st of April I know not. By the way I had a thing to say, but a certain false modesty has hitherto prevented me: perhaps I can best communicate my wish by a hint,—my birthday is on the 10th of February, New Style; but if it interferes with any remarkable event, why rather than my country should lose her fame, I care not if I put my nativity back eleven days. Fine family patronage for your "Calendar," if that old lady of prolific memory were living, who lies (or lyes) in some church in London (saints forgive me, but I have forgot *what* church), attesting that enormous legend of as many children as days in the year. I marvel her impudence did not grasp at a leap-year. Three hundred and sixty-five dedications, and all in a family—you might spit in spirit on the oneness of Mæcenas' patronage!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia—"Poor Lamb (these were his last words), if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me,"—in ordinary cases, I thanked him, I have an "Encyclopædia" at hand, but on such an occasion as going over to a German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ

I

"Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?"

II

"Whether the archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would*?"

III

"Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the schoolmen term 'virtutes minus splendidæ et hominis et terræ nimis participes?'"

IV

"Whether the seraphim ardentes do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue?"

V

"Whether the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever *sneer*?"

VI

"Whether pure intelligences can *love*, or whether they can love anything besides pure intellect?"

VII

"Whether the beatific vision be anything more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments, and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking-glasses?"

VIII

"Whether an 'immortal and amenable soul' may not come *to be damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?*"

Samuel Taylor C. hath not deigned an answer; was it impertinent of me to avail myself of that offered source of knowledge? Lloyd is returned to town from Ipswich where he has been with his brother. He has brought home three acts of a Play which I have not yet read. The scene for the most part laid in a Brothel. O tempora, O mores! but as friend Coleridge said when he was talking bawdy to Miss —— "to the pure all things are pure."

Wishing "Madoc" may be born into the world with as splendid promise as the second birth or purification of the Maid of Neufchatel,—I remain yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

I hope Edith is better; my kindest remembrances to her. You have a good deal of trifling to forgive in this letter.

NOTE

[This is Lamb's first letter to Southey that has been preserved. Probably others came before it. Southey now becomes Lamb's chief correspondent for some months. In Canon Ainger's transcript the letter ends with "Love and remembrances to Cottle."

Southey's *Joan of Arc*, second edition, had been published by Cottle in 1798. It has no frontispiece: the print of Joan of Arc must have come separately. Octavius was said (in "Antony and Cleopatra," III., 11, 35, 36) to have "kept His sword e'en like a dancer." Lamb was fond of this phrase: he uses it twice in the *Elia* essays.

Phillips was Sir Richard Phillips (1767-1840), editor of the *Monthly Magazine* and the publisher satirised in Borrow's *Lavengro*.

The Calendar ultimately became the *Annual Anthology*. Southey had at first an idea of making it a poetical calendar or almanac.

"That old lady of prolific memory." Lamb is thinking, I imagine, of the story in Howell's *Familiar Letters* (also in Evelyn's *Diary*)

of the "Wonder of Nature" near the Hague. "That Wonder of Nature is a Church-monument, where an Earl and a Lady are engraven with 365 Children about them, which were all deliver'd at one Birth." The story tells that a beggar woman with twins asked alms of the Countess, who denying that it was possible for two children to be born at once and vilifying the beggar, that woman cursed her and called upon God to show His judgment upon her by causing her to bear "at one birth as many Children as there are days in the year, which she did before the same year's end, having never born Child before." Howell seems to have been convinced of the authenticity of the story by the spectacle of the christening basin used by the family. The beggar, who spoke on the third day of the year, meant as many days as had been in that year—three.

Edith was Southey's wife.]

LETTER 35

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Oct. 18th, 1798.

DEAR Southey,—I have at last been so fortunate as to pick up Wither's Emblems for you, that "old book and quaint," as the brief author of "Rosamund Gray" hath it; it is in a most detestable state of preservation, and the cuts are of a fainter impression than I have seen. Some child, the curse of antiquaries and bane of bibliopolical rarities, hath been dabbling in some of them with its paint and dirty fingers, and in particular hath a little sullied the author's own portraiture, which I think valuable, as the poem that accompanies it is no common one; this last excepted, the Emblems are far inferior to old Quarles. I once told you otherwise, but I had not then read old Q. with attention. I have picked up, too, another copy of Quarles for ninepence!!! O tempora! O lectores!—so that if you have lost or parted with your own copy, say so, and I can furnish you, for you prize these things more than I do. You will be amused, I think, with honest Wither's "Supersedeas to all them whose custom it is, without any deserving, to importune authors to give unto them their books." I am sorry 'tis imperfect, as the lottery board annexed to it also is. Methinks you might modernise and elegantise this Supersedeas, and place it in front of your "Joan of Arc," as a gentle hint to Messrs. Park, &c. One of the happiest emblems and comicalest cuts is the owl and little chirpers, page 63.

Wishing you all amusement, which your true emblem-fancier can scarce fail to find in even bad emblems, I remain your caterer to command,

C. Lamb.

PLATE FROM WITHER'S EMBLEMS, 1635

Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well. How does your Calendar prosper?

NOTE

[This letter contains Lamb's first reference to *Rosamund Gray*, his only novel, which had been published a little earlier in the year. "Wither's *Emblems*, an 'old book and quaint,'" was one of the few volumes belonging to old Margaret, Rosamund's grandmother (Chapter I.). See next letter and note.

Wither's *Emblems* was published in 1635; Quarles' in the same year. Wither's "Supersedeas" will be found in the Appendix, page 950. I reproduce the owl and little chirpers from the edition of 1635.]

LETTER 86

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[October 29, 1798.]

DEAR Southey,—I thank you heartily for the Eclogue; it pleases me mightily, being so full of picture-work and circumstances. I find no fault in it, unless perhaps that Joanna's ruin is a catastrophe too trite: and this is not the first or second time you have clothed your indignation, in verse, in a tale of ruined innocence. The old lady, spinning in the sun, I hope would not disdain to claim some kindred with old Margaret. I could almost wish you to vary some circumstances in the conclusion. A gentleman seducer has so often been described in prose and verse; what if you had accomplished Joanna's ruin by the clumsy arts and rustic gifts of some country-fellow? I am thinking, I believe, of the song,

> "An old woman clothed in grey,
> Whose daughter was charming and young,
> And she was deluded away
> By Roger's false flattering tongue."

A Roger-Lothario would be a novel character: I think you might paint him very well. You may think this a very silly suggestion, and so, indeed, it is; but, in good truth, nothing else but the first words of that foolish ballad put me upon scribbling my "Rosamund." But I thank you heartily for the poem. Not having anything of my own to send you in return—though, to tell truth, I am at work upon something, which if I were to cut away and garble, perhaps I might send you an extract or two that might not displease you; but I will not do that; and whether it will come to anything, I

know not, for I am as slow as a Fleming painter when I compose anything. I will crave leave to put down a few lines of old Christopher Marlow's; I take them from his tragedy, "The Jew of Malta." The Jew is a famous character, quite out of nature; but, when we consider the terrible idea our simple ancestors had of a Jew, not more to be discommended for a certain discolouring (I think Addison calls it) than the witches and fairies of Marlow's mighty successor. The scene is betwixt Barabas, the Jew, and Ithamore, a Turkish captive exposed to sale for a slave.

BARABAS

(*A precious rascal.*)

"As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls:
Sometimes I go about, and poison wells;
And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my crowns,
That I may, walking in my gallery,
See 'm go pinioned along by my door.
Being young, I studied physic, and began
To practise first upon the Italian:
There I enriched the priests with burials,
And always kept the sexton's arms in ure
With digging graves and ringing dead men's knells;
And, after that, was I an engineer,
And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,
Under pretence of serving [helping] Charles the Fifth,
Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.
Then after that was I an usurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging unto brokery,
I fill'd the jails with bankrupts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals,
And every moon made some or other mad;
And now and then one hang'd himself for grief,
Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll,
How I with interest tormented him."

Now hear Ithamore, the other gentle nature, explain how he spent his time:—

ITHAMORE

(*A comical dog.*)

"Faith, master, in setting Christian villages on fire,
Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley-slaves.
One time I was an hostler at [in] an inn,
And in the night-time secretly would I steal
To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats.
Once at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,
I strowed powder on the marble stones,
And therewithal their knees would rankle so,
That I have laugh'd a-good to see the cripples
Go limping home to Christendom on stilts."

BARABAS

"Why, this is something"——

There is a mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in these lines, brimful of genius and antique invention, that at first reminded me of your old description of cruelty in hell, which was in the true Hogarthian style. I need not tell *you* that Marlow was author of that pretty madrigal, "Come live with me, and be my Love," and of the tragedy of "Edward II.," in which are certain *lines* unequalled in our English tongue. Honest Walton mentions the said madrigal under the denomination of "certain smooth verses made long since by Kit Marlow."

I am glad you have put me on the scent after old Quarles. If I do not put up those eclogues, and that shortly, say I am no true-nosed hound. I have had a letter from Lloyd; the young metaphysician of Caius is well, and is busy recanting the new heresy, metaphysics, for the old dogma, Greek. My sister, I thank you, is quite well. She had a slight attack the other day, which frightened me a good deal; but it went off unaccountably. Love and respects to Edith.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The eclogue was "The Ruined Cottage," in which Joanna and her widowed mother are at first as happy as Rosamund Gray and old blind Margaret. As in Lamb's story so in Southey's poem, this state of felicity is overturned by a seducer.

"An old woman clothed in gray." This ballad still eludes research. Lamb says that the first line put him upon writing *Rosamund Gray*, but he is generally supposed to have taken his heroine's name from a song by Charles Lloyd, entitled "Rosamund Gray," published among his *Poems* in 1795. At the end of the novel Matravis, the seducer, in his ravings, sings the ballad.

The "something" upon which Lamb was then at work was his play "John Woodvil," in those early days known as "Pride's Cure."

The passage from Marlowe's "The Rich Jew of Malta" is in Act II. Lamb included other passages in his *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, and also passages from "Edward II." Walton quotes the madrigal in *The Complete Angler*.

"Your old description of cruelty in hell." In "Joan of Arc." See Letter 3, page 14.

"If I do not put up those eclogues." Lamb does not return to this subject.

Lloyd had just gone to Cambridge, to Caius College.]

LETTER 37

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 3, 1798.

I HAVE read your Eclogue ["The Wedding"] repeatedly, and cannot call it bald, or without interest; the cast of it, and the design are completely original, and may set people upon thinking: it is as poetical as the subject requires, which asks no poetry; but it is defective in pathos. The woman's own story is the tamest part of it—I should like you to remould that—it too much resembles the young maid's history: both had been in service. Even the omission would not injure the poem; after the words "growing wants," you might, not unconnectedly, introduce "look at that little chub" down to "welcome one." And, decidedly, I would have you end it somehow thus,

> "Give them at least this evening a good meal.
> [*Gives her money.*
> Now, fare thee well; hereafter you have taught me
> To give sad meaning to the village-bells," &c.,

which would leave a stronger impression (as well as more pleasingly recall the beginning of the Eclogue), than the present common-place reference to a better world, which the woman "must have heard at church." I should like you, too, a good deal to enlarge the most striking part, as it might have been, of the poem—"Is it idleness?" &c., that affords a good field for dwelling on sickness and inabilities, and old age. And you might also a good deal enrich the piece with a picture of a country wedding: the woman might very well, in a transient fit of oblivion, dwell upon the ceremony and circumstances of her own nuptials six years ago, the smugness of the bridegroom, the feastings, the cheap merriment, the welcomings, and the secret envyings of the maidens—then dropping all this, recur to her present lot. I do not know that I can suggest anything else, or that I have suggested anything new or material.

I shall be very glad to see some more poetry, though I fear your trouble in transcribing will be greater than the service my remarks may do them.

Yours affectionately, C. LAMB.

I cut my letter short because I am called off to business.

LETTER 38

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 8th, 1798.

I DO not know that I much prefer this Eclogue [Lamb has received 'The Last of the Flock'] to the last ['The Wedding']; both are inferior to the former ['The Ruined Cottage'].

> "And when he came to shake me by the hand,
> And spake as kindly to me as he used,
> I hardly knew his voice—"

is the only passage that affected me.

Servants speak, and their language ought to be plain, and not much raised above the common, else I should find fault with the bathos of this passage:

> "And when I heard the bell strike out,
> I thought (what?) that I had never heard it toll
> So dismally before."

I like the destruction of the martens' old nests hugely, having just such a circumstance in my memory.[1] I should be very glad to see your remaining Eclogue, if not too much trouble, as you give me reason to expect it will be the second best.

I perfectly accord with your opinion of old Wither. Quarles is a wittier writer, but Wither lays more hold of the heart. Quarles thinks of his audience when he lectures; Wither soliloquises in company with a full heart. What wretched stuff are the "Divine Fancies" of Quarles! Religion appears to him no longer valuable than it furnishes matter for quibbles and riddles; he turns God's grace into wantonness. Wither is like an old friend, whose warm-heartedness and estimable qualities make us wish he possessed more genius, but at the same time make us willing to dispense with that want. I always love W., and sometimes admire Q. Still that

[1] [The destruction of the martens' nests, in "The Last of the Family," runs thus:—

> I remember,
> Eight months ago, when the young Squire began
> To alter the old mansion, they destroy'd
> The martins' nests, that had stood undisturb'd
> Under that roof, . . . ay! long before my memory,
> I shook my head at seeing it, and thought
> No good could follow.]

portrait poem is a fine one; and the extract from "The Shepherds' Hunting" places him in a starry height far above Quarles. If you wrote that review in "Crit. Rev.," I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the "Ancient Marinere;"—so far from calling it, as you do, with some wit, but more severity, "A Dutch Attempt," &c., I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in that part,

> "A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware—"

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings. Lloyd does not like it; his head is too metaphysical, and your taste too correct; at least I must allege something against you both, to excuse my own dotage—

> "So lonely 'twas, that God himself
> Scarce seemèd there to be!"—&c., &c.

But you allow some elaborate beauties—you should have extracted 'em. "The Ancient Marinere" plays more tricks with the mind than that last poem, which is yet one of the finest written. But I am getting too dogmatical; and before I degenerate into abuse, I will conclude with assuring you that I am

Sincerely yours,
C. Lamb.

I am going to meet Lloyd at Ware on Saturday, to return on Sunday. Have you any commands or commendations to the metaphysician? I shall be very happy if you will dine or spend any time with me in your way through the great ugly city; but I know you have other ties upon you in these parts.

Love and respects to Edith, and friendly remembrances to Cottle.

Note

[Lamb's ripe judgment of Wither will be found in his essay "On the Poetical Works of George Wither," in the *Works*, 1818 (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 181). "The portrait poem" would be "The Author's Meditation upon Sight of His Picture," prefixed to *Emblems*, 1635.

Lyrical Ballads, by Wordsworth and Coleridge, had just been published by Cottle. "The Ancient Mariner" stood first. "That

last poem" was Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey." Southey (?) reviewed the book in the *Critical Review* for October, 1798. Of the "Ancient Mariner" he said: "It is a Dutch attempt at German sublimity. Genius has here been employed in producing a poem of little merit."

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, dated November 13, 1798, not available for this edition. Robert Lloyd seems to have said in his last letter that the world was drained of all its sweets. Lamb sends him a beautiful passage in praise of the world's good things—the first foretaste in the correspondence of his later ecstatic manner.

Here also should come a letter from Lamb to Southey, which apparently does not now exist, containing "The Dying Lover," an extract from Lamb's play. I have taken the text from the version of the play sent to Manning late in 1800 (see page 205). Lamb did not include "The Dying Lover" in John Woodvil when he printed it in 1802; but he sent it, slightly altered, to Dr. Anderson's magazine (see page 187) for November, 1800, and to the *London Magazine* for January, 1822.

THE DYING LOVER

Margaret. . . . I knew a youth who died
For grief, because his Love proved so,
And married to another.
I saw him on the wedding day,
For he was present in the church that day,
And in his best apparel too,
As one that came to grace the ceremony.
I mark'd him when the ring was given,
His countenance never changed;
And when the priest pronounced the marriage blessing,
He put a silent prayer up for the bride,
For they stood near who saw his lips move.
He came invited to the marriage-feast
With the bride's friends,
And was the merriest of them all that day;
But they, who knew him best, call'd it feign'd mirth;
And others said,
He wore a smile like death's upon his face.
His presence dash'd all the beholders' mirth,
And he went away in tears.
Simon. What followed then?
Marg. Oh! then
He did not as neglected suitors use
Affect a life of solitude in shades,
But lived,
In free discourse and sweet society,
Among his friends who knew his gentle nature best.
Yet ever when he smiled,
There was a mystery legible in his face,
That whoso saw him said he was a man

Not long for this world.——
And true it was, for even then
The silent love was feeding at his heart
Of which he died:
Nor ever spake word of reproach,
Only he wish'd in death that his remains
Might find a poor grave in some spot, not far
From his mistress' family vault, "being the place
Where one day Anna should herself be laid."

The line in italics Lamb crossed through in the Manning copy. The last four lines he crossed through and marked "*very* bad." I have reproduced them here because of the autobiographical hint contained in the word Anna, which was the name given by Lamb to his "fair-haired maid" in his love sonnets.]

LETTER 39

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[Probably November, 1798.]

THE following is a second Extract from my Tragedy *that is to be*,—'tis narrated by an old Steward to Margaret, orphan ward of Sir Walter Woodvil;—this, and the Dying Lover I gave you, are the only extracts I can give without mutilation. I expect you to like the old woman's curse:

Old Steward.—One summer night, Sir Walter, as it chanc'd,
Was pacing to & fro in the avenue
That westward fronts our house,
Among those aged oaks, said to have been planted
Three hundred years ago
By a neighb'ring Prior of the Woodvil name,
But so it was,
Being overtask't in thought, he heeded not
The importune suitor who stood by the gate,
And beg'd an alms.
Some say he shov'd her rudely from the gate
With angry chiding; but I can never think
(Sir Walter's nature hath a sweetness in it)
That he would use a woman—an old woman—
With such discourtesy;
For old she was who beg'd an alms of him.
Well, he refus'd her;
Whether for importunity, I know not,
Or that she came between his meditations.
But better had he met a lion in the streets
Than this old woman that night;
For she was one who practis'd the black arts,
And served the devil—being since burn'd for witchcraft.
She look'd at him like one that meant to blast him,
And with a frightful noise
('Twas partly like a woman's voice,
And partly like the hissing of a snake)
She nothing said but this (Sir Walter told the words):

"A mischief, mischief, mischief,
And a nine-times killing curse,
By day and by night, to the caitive wight
Who shakes the poor like snakes from his door,
And shuts up the womb of his purse;
And a mischief, mischief, mischief,
And a nine-fold withering curse,—
For that shall come to thee, that will render thee
Both all that thou fear'st, and worse."

These words four times repeated, she departed,
Leaving Sir Walter like a man beneath
Whose feet a scaffolding had suddenly fal'n:
So he describ'd it.
Margaret.—A terrible curse!
Old Steward.—O Lady, such bad things are told of that old woman,
As, namely, that the milk she gave was sour,
And the babe who suck'd her shrivel'd like a mandrake;
And things besides, with a bigger horror in them,
Almost, I think, unlawful to be told!
Margaret.—Then must I never hear them. But proceed,
And say what follow'd on the witch's curse.
Old Steward.—Nothing immediate; but some nine months after,
Young Stephen Woodvil suddenly fell sick,
And none could tell what ail'd him: for he lay,
And pin'd, and pin'd, that all his hair came off;
And he, that was full-flesh'd, became as thin
As a two-months' babe that hath been starved in the nursing;—
And sure, I think,
He bore his illness like a little child,
With such rare sweetness of dumb melancholy
He strove to clothe his agony in smiles,
Which he would force up in his poor, pale cheeks,
Like ill-tim'd guests that had no proper business there;—
And when they ask'd him his complaint, he laid
His hand upon his heart to show the place
Where Satan came to him a nights, he said,
And prick'd him with a pin.—
And hereupon Sir Walter call'd to mind
The Beggar Witch that stood in the gateway,
And begg'd an alms—
Margaret.—I do not love to credit Tales of magic.
Heav'n's music, which is order, seems unstrung;
And this brave world,
Creation's beauteous work, unbeautified,
Disorder'd, marr'd, where such strange things are acted.

This is the extract I brag'd of, as superior to that I sent you from Marlow. Perhaps you smile; but I should like your remarks on the above, as you are deeper witch-read than I.

NOTE

[The passage quoted in this letter, with certain alterations, became afterwards "The Witch," a dramatic sketch independent of "John Woodvil." By the phrase "without mutilation," Lamb possibly means to suggest that Southey should print this sketch and

"The Dying Lover" in the *Annual Anthology*. That was not, however, done. "The Witch" was first printed in the *Works*, 1818.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, postmarked November 20, 1798, not available for this edition. In this letter Lamb sends Lloyd the extract from "The Witch" that was sent to Southey.]

LETTER 40

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 28th, 1798.

I CAN have no objection to your printing "Mystery of God" with my name and all due acknowledgments for the honour and favour of the communication; indeed, 'tis a poem that can dishonour no name. Now, that is in the true strain of modern modesto-vanitas. . . . But for the sonnet, I heartily wish it, as I thought it was, dead and forgotten. If the exact circumstances under which I wrote could be known or told, it would be an interesting sonnet; but to an indifferent and stranger reader it must appear a very bald thing, certainly inadmissible in a compilation. I wish you could affix a different name to the volume; there is a contemptible book, a wretched assortment of vapid feelings, entitled "Pratt's Gleanings," which hath damned and impropriated the title for ever. Pray think of some other. The gentleman is better known (better had he remained unknown) by an Ode to Benevolence, written and spoken for and at the annual dinner of the Humane Society, who walk in procession once a-year, with all the objects of their charity before them, to return God thanks for giving them such benevolent hearts.

I like "Bishop Bruno;" but not so abundantly as your "Witch Ballad," which is an exquisite thing of its kind.

I showed my "Witch" and "Dying Lover" to Dyer last night; but George could not comprehend how that could be poetry which did not go upon ten feet, as George and his predecessors had taught it to do; so George read me some lectures on the distinguishing qualities of the Ode, the Epigram, and the Epic, and went home to illustrate his doctrine by correcting a proof sheet of his own Lyrics. George writes odes where the rhymes, like fashionable man and wife, keep a comfortable distance of six or eight lines apart, and calls that "observing the laws of verse." George tells you, before he recites, that you must listen with great attention,

or you'll miss the rhymes. I did so, and found them pretty exact. George, speaking of the dead Ossian, exclaimeth, "Dark are the poet's eyes." I humbly represented to him that his own eyes were dark [? light], and many a living bard's besides, and recommended "Clos'd are the poet's eyes." But that would not do. I found there was an antithesis between the darkness of his eyes and the splendour of his genius; and I acquiesced.

Your recipe for a Turk's poison is invaluable and truly Marlowish. . . . Lloyd objects to "shutting up the womb of his purse" in my Curse (which for a Christian witch in a Christian country is not too mild, I hope); do you object? I think there is a strangeness in the idea, as well as "shaking the poor like snakes from his door," which suits the speaker. Witches illustrate, as fine ladies do, from their own familiar objects, and snakes and the shutting up of wombs are in their way. I don't know that this last charge has been before brought against 'em, nor either the sour milk or the mandrake babe; but I affirm these be things a witch would do if she could.

My Tragedy will be a medley (as [? and] I intend it to be a medley) of laughter and tears, prose and verse, and in some places rhyme, songs, wit, pathos, humour, and, if possible, sublimity; at least, it is not a fault in my intention, if it does not comprehend most of these discordant colours. Heaven send they dance not the "Dance of Death!" I hear that the Two Noble Englishmen have parted no sooner than they set foot on German earth, but I have not heard the reason—possibly, to give novelists an handle to exclaim, "Ah me! what things are perfect?" I think I shall adopt your emendation in the "Dying Lover," though I do not myself feel the objection against "Silent Prayer."

My tailor has brought me home a new coat lapelled, with a velvet collar. He assures me everybody wears velvet collars now. Some are born fashionable, some achieve fashion, and others, like your humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them. The rogue has been making inroads hitherto by modest degrees, foisting upon me an additional button, recommending gaiters; but to come upon me thus in a full tide of luxury, neither becomes him as a tailor nor the ninth of a man. My meek gentleman was robbed the other day, coming with his wife and family in a one-horse shay from Hampstead; the villains rifled him of four guineas, some shillings and half-pence, and a bundle of customers' measures, which they swore were bank-notes. They did not shoot him, and when they rode off he addrest them with profound gratitude, making a congee: "Gentlemen, I wish you good night, and we are very much obliged to you that you have not used us ill!" And this is the cuckoo that has had the audacity to foist upon me ten

buttons on a side and a black velvet collar—A damn'd ninth of a scoundrel!

When you write to Lloyd, he wishes his Jacobin correspondents to address him as *Mr.* C. L. Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The poem "Mystery of God" was, when printed in the *Annual Anthology* for 1799, entitled "Living without God in the World." Lamb never reprinted it. It is not clear to what sonnet Lamb refers, possibly that to his sister, printed on page 78, which he himself never reprinted. It was at that time intended to call Southey's collection *Gleanings;* Lamb refers to the *Gleanings* of Samuel Jackson Pratt (1749-1814), a very busy maker of books, published in 1795-1799. His *Triumph of Benevolence* was published in 1786.

Southey's witch ballad was "The Old Woman of Berkeley."

George Dyer's principal works in verse are contained in his *Poems*, 1802, and *Poetics*, 1812. He retained the epithet "dark" for Ossian's eyes.

Southey's recipe for a Turk's poison I do not find. It may have existed only in a letter.

A reference to the poem on page 132 will explain the remarks about witches' curses.

The Two Noble Englishmen (a sarcastic reference drawn, I imagine, from Palamon and Arcite) were Coleridge and Wordsworth, then in Germany. Nothing definite is known, but they seem quite amicably to have decided to take independent courses.

"Some are born fashionable." After Malvolio ("Twelfth Night," II., 5, 157, etc.).

"Lloyd's Jacobin correspondents." This is Lamb's only allusion to the attack which had been made by *The Anti-Jacobin* upon himself, Lloyd and their friends, particularly Coleridge and Southey. In "The New Morality," in the last number of Canning's paper, they had been thus grouped:—

> And ye five other wandering Bards that move
> In sweet accord of harmony and love,
> C——dge and S—th—y, L—d, and L—be & Co.
> Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux!

—Lepaux being the high-priest of Theophilanthropy. When "The New Morality" was reprinted in *The Beauties of "The Anti-Jacobin"* in 1799, a savage footnote on Coleridge was appended, accusing him of hypocrisy and the desertion of his wife and

children, and adding "*Ex uno disce* his associates Southey and Lamb." Again, in the first number of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, August, 1798, was a picture by Gilray, representing the worshippers of Lepaux, wherein Lloyd and Lamb appeared as a toad and a frog reading their own *Blank Verse*, and Coleridge and Southey, as donkeys, flourish "Dactylics" and "Saphics." In September the federated poets were again touched upon in a parody of the "Ode to the Passions":—

See! faithful to their mighty dam,
C——dge, S—th—y, L—d, and L—b
In splay-foot madrigals of love,
Soft moaning like the widow'd dove,
Pour, side-by-side, their sympathetic notes;
Of equal rights, and civic feasts,
And tyrant kings, and knavish priests,
Swift through the land the tuneful mischief floats.

And now to softer strains they struck the lyre,
They sung the beetle or the mole,
The dying kid, or ass's foal,
By cruel man permitted to expire.

Lloyd took the caricature and the verses with his customary seriousness, going so far as to indite a "Letter to *The Anti-Jacobin* Reviewers," which was printed in Birmingham in 1799. Therein he defended Lamb with some vigour: "The person you have thus leagued in a partnership of infamy with me is Mr. Charles Lamb, a man who, so far from being a democrat, would be the first person to assent to the opinions contained in the foregoing pages: he is a man too much occupied with real and painful duties—duties of high personal self-denial—to trouble himself about speculative matters."]

LETTER 41

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Dec. 27, 1798.

DEAR Southey,—Your friend John May has formerly made kind offers to Lloyd of serving me in the India house by the interest of his friend Sir Francis Baring—It is not likely that I shall ever put his goodness to the test on my own account, for my prospects are very comfortable. But I know a man, a young man, whom he could serve thro' the same channel, and I think would be disposed to serve if he were acquainted with his case. This poor fellow (whom I know just enough of to vouch for his strict integrity & worth) has lost two or three employments from illness, which

he cannot regain; he was once insane, & from the distressful uncertainty of his livelihood has reason to apprehend a return of that malady—He has been for some time dependant on a woman whose lodger he formerly was, but who can ill afford to maintain him, and I know that on Christmas night last he actually walk'd about the streets all night, rather than accept of her Bed, which she offer'd him, and offer'd herself to sleep in the kitchen, and that in consequence of that severe cold he is labouring under a bilious disorder, besides a depression of spirits, which incapacitates him from exertion when he most needs it—For God's sake, Southey, if it does not go against you to ask favors, do it now—ask it as for me—but do not do a violence to your feelings, because he does not know of this application, and will suffer no disappointment—What I meant to say was this—there are in the India house what are called *Extra Clerks*, not on the Establishment, like me, but employed in Extra business, by-jobs—these get about £50 a year, or rather more, but never rise—a Director can put in at any time a young man in this office, and it is by no means consider'd so great a favor as making an establish'd Clerk. He would think himself as rich as an Emperor if he could get such a certain situation, and be relieved from those disquietudes which I do fear may one day bring back his distemper—

You know John May better than I do, but I know enough to believe that he is a good man—he did make me that offer I have mention'd, but you will perceive that such an offer cannot authorize me in applying for another Person.

But I cannot help writing to you on the subject, for the young man is perpetually before my eyes, and I should feel it a crime not to strain all my petty interest to do him service, tho' I put my own delicacy to the question by so doing—I have made one other unsuccessful attempt already—

At all events I will thank you to write, for I am tormented with anxiety—

I suppose you have somewhere heard that poor Mary Dollin has poisoned herself, after some interviews with John Reid, the ci-devant Alphonso of her days of hope.

How is Edith? C. Lamb.

Note

[John May was a friend and correspondent of Southey whom he had met at Lisbon: not to be confounded with Coleridge's inn-keeping May.

Sir Francis Baring was a director of the East India Company. I have no knowledge as to who the young man was; nor have I any regarding Mary Dollin and John Reid.]

LETTER 42

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Jan. 21st, 1799.

I AM requested by Lloyd to excuse his not replying to a kind letter received from you. He is at present situated in most distressful family perplexities, which I am not at liberty to explain; but they are such as to demand all the strength of his mind, and quite exclude any attention to foreign objects. His brother Robert (the flower of his family) hath eloped from the persecutions of his father, and has taken shelter with me. What the issue of his adventure will be, I know not. He hath the sweetness of an angel in his heart, combined with admirable firmness of purpose: an uncultivated, but very original, and, I think, superior genius. But this step of his is but a small part of their family troubles.

I am to blame for not writing to you before on *my own account;* but I know you can dispense with the expressions of gratitude, or I should have thanked you before for all May's kindness. He has liberally supplied the person I spoke to you of with money, and had procured him a situation just after himself had lighted upon a similar one and engaged too far to recede. But May's kindness was the same, and my thanks to you and him are the same. May went about on this business as if it had been his own. But you knew John May before this: so I will be silent.

I shall be very glad to hear from you when convenient. I do not know how your Calendar and other affairs thrive; but, above all, I have not heard a great while of your "Madoc"—the *opus magnum.* I would willingly send you something to give a value to this letter; but I have only one slight passage to send you, scarce worth the sending, which I want to edge in somewhere into my play, which, by the way, hath not received the addition of ten lines, besides, since I saw you. A father, old Walter Woodvil, (the witch's PROTÉGÉ) relates this of his son John, who "fought in adverse armies," being a royalist, and his father a parliamentary man:—

> "I saw him in the day of Worcester fight,
> Whither he came at twice seven years,
> Under the discipline of the Lord Falkland
> (His uncle by the mother's side,
> Who gave his youthful politics a bent
> Quite *from* the principles of his father's house;)
> There did I see this valiant Lamb of Mars,
> This sprig of honour, this unbearded John,
> This veteran in green years, this sprout, this Woodvil,
> (With dreadless ease guiding a fire-hot steed,

Which seem'd to scorn the manage of a boy),
Prick forth with such a *mirth* into the field,
To mingle rivalship and acts of war
Even with the sinewy masters of the art,—
You would have thought the work of blood had been
A play-game merely, and the rabid Mars
Had put his harmful hostile nature off,
To instruct raw youth in images of war,
And practice of the unedged players' foils.
The rough fanatic and blood-practised soldiery
Seeing such hope and virtue in the boy,
Disclosed their ranks to let him pass unhurt,
Checking their swords' uncivil injuries,
As loth to mar that curious workmanship
Of Valour's beauty pourtray'd in his face."

Lloyd objects to "pourtrayed in his face,"—do you? I like the line.

I shall clap this in somewhere. I think there is a spirit through the lines; perhaps the 7th, 8th, and 9th owe their origin to Shakspeare, though no image is borrowed.

He says in "Henry the Fourth"—

"This infant Hotspur,
Mars in swathing clothes."
[See Pt. I., III., 2, 111, 112.]

But pray did Lord Falkland die before Worcester fight? In that case I must make bold to unclify some other nobleman.

Kind love and respects to Edith. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Charles Lloyd's perplexities turned probably once again on the question of his marriage. How long Robert Lloyd was with Lamb we do not know; nor of what nature were the "persecutions" to which he was subjected. According to the evidence at our disposal, Charles Lloyd, sen., was a good father.

Southey's *Madoc* was not published until 1805.

The passage from the play was not printed in *John Woodvil*. This, together with "The Dying Lover" on page 131, are to be found only in the discarded version, printed in the Notes to *Poems and Plays*, Vol. V. of the present edition of Lamb's works. Lord Falkland had been killed at Newbury eight years before Worcester fight. Lamb altered the names to Ashley and Naseby, although Sir Anthony Cooper was not made Lord Ashley until sixteen years after Naseby was fought.]

LETTER 48

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[Late January or early February, 1799.]

DR Southey,—Lloyd will now be able to give you an account of himself, so to him I leave you for satisfaction. Great part of his troubles are lightened by the partial recovery of his sister, who had been alarmingly ill with similar diseases to his own. The other part of the family troubles sleeps for the present, but I fear will awake at some future time to *confound* and *disunite*. He will probably tell you all about it. Robert still continues here with me, his father has proposed nothing, but would willingly lure him back with fair professions. But Robert is endowed with a wise fortitude, and in this business has acted quite from himself, and wisely acted. His parents must come forward in the End. I like reducing parents to a sense of undutifulness. I like confounding the relations of life. Pray let me see you when you come to town, and contrive to give me some of your company.

I thank you heartily for your intended presents, but do by no means see the necessity you are under of burthening yourself thereby. You have read old Wither's Supersedeas to small purpose. You object to my pauses being at the end of my lines. I do not know any great difficulty I should find in diversifying or changing my blank verse; but I go upon the model of Shakspere in my Play, and endeavour after a colloquial ease and spirit, something like him. I could so easily imitate Milton's versification; but my ear & feeling would reject it, or any approaches to it, in the *drama*. I do not know whether to be glad or sorry that witches have been detected aforetimes in shutting up of wombs. I certainly invented that conceit, and its coincidence with fact is incidental [? accidental], for I never heard it. I have not seen those verses on Col. Despard—I do not read any newspapers. Are they short, to copy without much trouble? I should like to see them.

I just send you a few rhymes from my play, the only rhymes in it—a forest-liver giving an account of his amusements:—

> What sports have you in the forest?
> Not many,—some few,—as thus,
> To see the sun to bed, and see him rise,
> Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
> Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him:
> With all his fires and travelling glories round him:
> Sometimes the moon on soft night-clouds to rest,
> Like beauty nestling in a young man's breast,

And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep
Admiring silence, while those lovers sleep:
Sometimes outstretch'd in very idleness,
Nought doing, saying little, thinking less,
To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,
Go eddying round; and small birds how they fare,
When mother Autumn fills their beaks with corn,
Filch'd from the careless Amalthea's horn;
And how the woods berries and worms provide,
Without their pains, when earth hath nought beside
To answer their small wants;
To view the graceful deer come trooping by,
Then pause, and gaze, then turn they know not why,
Like bashful younkers in society;
To mark the structure of a plant or tree;
And all fair things of earth, how fair they be! &c. &c.

I love to anticipate charges of unoriginality: the first line is almost Shakspere's:—

"To have my love to bed & to arise."
Midsummer Night's Dream [III., 1, 174].

I think there is a sweetness in the versification not unlike some rhymes in that exquisite play, and the last line but three is yours:

"An eye
That met the gaze, or turn'd it knew not why."
Rosamund's Epistle.

I shall anticipate all my play, and have nothing to shew you.

An idea for Leviathan:—

Commentators on Job have been puzzled to find out a meaning for Leviathan,—'tis a whale, say some; a crocodile, say others. In my simple conjecture, Leviathan is neither more nor less than the Lord Mayor of London for the time being.

"Rosamund" sells well in London, maugre the non-reviewal of it.

I sincerely wish you better health, & better health to Edith. Kind remembrances to her.

C. Lamb.

If you come to town by Ash Wensday [February 6], you will certainly see Lloyd here—I expect him by that time.

My sister Mary was never in better health or spirits than now.

Note

[Writing in June, 1799, to Robert Lloyd, Priscilla, his sister, says: "Lamb would not I think by any means be a person to take up your abode with. He is too much like yourself—he would encourage those feelings which it certainly is your duty to suppress. Your station in life—the duties which are pointed out by that

rank in society which you are destined to fill—differ widely from his." When next we hear of Robert Lloyd he has returned to Birmingham, where his father soon afterwards bought him a partnership in a bookselling and printing business.

"Col. Despard." I have not found the verses. Colonel Edward Marcus Despard, after a career that began brilliantly, was imprisoned in the spring of 1798 and executed for High Treason in 1803.

The rhymed passage from *John Woodvil* is that which is best known. Hazlitt relates that Godwin was so taken with it when he first read it that he asked every one he met to tell him the author and play, and at last applied to Lamb himself.

The quotation from Southey ("Rosamund to Henry") is not correctly given. It should run (lines 67, 68):—

The modest eye
That met the glance, or turn'd, it knew not why.]

LETTER 44

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

March 15th, 1799.

DEAR Southey,—I have received your little volume, for which I thank you, though I do not entirely approve of this sort of intercourse, where the presents are all one side. I have read the last Eclogue again with great pleasure. It hath gained considerably by abridgment, and now I think it wants nothing but enlargement. You will call this one of tyrant Procrustes' criticisms, to cut and pull so to his own standard; but the old lady is so great a favourite with me, I want to hear more of her; and of "Joanna" you have given us still less. But the picture of the rustics leaning over the bridge, and the old lady travelling abroad on a summer evening to see her garden watered, are images so new and true, that I decidedly prefer this "Ruin'd Cottage" to any poem in the book. Indeed I think it the only one that will bear comparison with your "Hymn to the Penates" in a former volume.

I compare dissimilar things, as one would a rose and a star for the pleasure they give us, or as a child soon learns to choose between a cake and a rattle; for dissimilars have mostly some points of comparison. The next best poem, I think, is the First Eclogue; 'tis very complete, and abounding in little pictures and realities. The remainder Eclogues, excepting only the "Funeral," I do not greatly admire. I miss *one*, which had at least as good a title to

publication as the "Witch," or the "Sailor's Mother." You call'd it the "Last of the Family." The "Old Woman of Berkeley" comes next; in some humours I would give it the preference above any. But who the devil is Matthew of Westminster? You are as familiar with these antiquated monastics, as Swedenborg, or, as his followers affect to call him, the Baron, with his invisibles. But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert with so little alteration his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for the spleen. The Parody is *not* so successful; it has one famous line indeed, which conveys the finest death-bed image I ever met with:

"The doctor whisper'd the nurse, and the surgeon knew what he said."

But the offering the bride three times bears not the slightest analogy or proportion to the fiendish noises three times heard! In "Jaspar," the circumstance of the great light is very affecting. But I had heard you mention it before. The "Rose" is the only insipid piece in the volume; it hath neither thorns nor sweetness, and, besides, sets all chronology and probability at defiance.

"Cousin Margaret," you know, I like. The allusions to the "Pilgrim's Progress" are particularly happy, and harmonise tacitly and delicately with old cousins and aunts. To familiar faces we do associate familiar scenes and accustomed objects; but what hath Apollidon and his sea-nymphs to do in these affairs? Apollyon I could have borne, though he stands for the devil; but who is Apollidon? I think you are too apt to conclude faintly, with some cold moral, as in the end of the poem called "The Victory"—

"Be thou her comforter, who art the widow's friend;"

a single common-place line of comfort, which bears no proportion in weight or number to the many lines which describe suffering. This is to convert religion into mediocre feelings, which should burn, and glow, and tremble. A moral should be wrought into the body and soul, the matter and tendency, of a poem, not tagged to the end, like a "God send the good ship into harbour," at the conclusion of our bills of lading. The finishing of the "Sailor" is also imperfect. Any dissenting minister may say and do as much.

These remarks, I know, are crude and unwrought; but I do not lay claim to much accurate thinking. I never judge system-wise of things, but fasten upon particulars. After all, there is a great deal in the book that I must, for time, leave *unmentioned*, to deserve my thanks for its own sake, as well as for the friendly

remembrances implied in the gift. I again return you my thanks.

Pray present my love to Edith. C. L.

NOTE

[Southey's little volume was Vol. II. of the second edition of his *Poems*, published in 1799. The last of the English Eclogues included in it was "The Ruined Cottage," slightly altered from the version referred to in the letter on page 129. The "Hymn to the Penates" brought the first volume of this edition to a close. The first Eclogue was "The Old Mansion House." "The Old Woman of Berkeley" was called "A Ballad showing how an Old Woman rode double and who rode before her." It was preceded by a long quotation in Latin from Matthew of Westminster. Matthew of Westminster is the imaginary name given to the unknown authors of a chronicle called *Flores Historiarum*, belonging probably to the fifteenth century. The Parody was "The Surgeon's Warning," which begins with the two lines that Lamb prints as one:—

> The Doctor whisper'd to the Nurse,
> And the Surgeon knew what he said.

"The Rose" was blank verse, addressed to Edith Southey. "Cousin Margaret" was a "Metrical Letter Written from London," in which there are allusions to Bunyan. The reference to Apollidon is explained by these lines:—

> The Sylphs should waft us to some goodly isle,
> Like that where whilome old Apollidon
> Built up his blameless spell.]

LETTER 45

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

March 20th, 1799.

I AM hugely pleased with your "Spider," "your old freemason," as you call him. The three first stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and Old Quarles, those kind of home-strokes, where more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder Rob. Burns in his lifetime never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza is less

striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no old-fashioned phrase or feeling.

"Young hopes, and love's delightful dreams,"

savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath nothing striking in it, if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing, which comes tenfold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamuels and Zillahs and Madelons. I beg you will send me the "Holly-tree," if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened; Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophised a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge, less successfully, hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following at unresembling distance Sterne and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our "poor earth-born companions." It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other people, not one's own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could (I am in earnest), to commence a series of these animal poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts come across me;—for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole—People bake moles alive by a slow oven-fire to cure consumption. Rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God's earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads you know are made to fly, and tumble down and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport; then again to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intolerable, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping skates, &c., &c., would take excessively. I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you: I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good and useful, full of pleasure and full of moral. If old Quarles

and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part. [See Appendix II., page 965.]

Poor Sam. Le Grice! I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him among them. 'Tis certain he had at one time a strong capacity of turning out something better. I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the warmest friendship and heartiest sympathy, even for an agony of sympathy exprest both by word and deed, and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress. But I have forgot that! as, I fear, he has nigh forgot the awful scenes which were before his eyes when he served the office of a comforter to me. No service was too mean or troublesome for him to perform. I can't think what but the devil, "that old spider," could have suck'd my heart so dry of its sense of all gratitude. If he does come in your way, Southey, fail not to tell him that I retain a most affectionate remembrance of his old friendliness, and an earnest wish to resume our intercourse. In this I am serious. I cannot recommend him to your society, because I am afraid whether he be quite worthy of it. But I have no right to dismiss him from *my* regard. He was at one time, and in the worst of times, my own familiar friend, and great comfort to me then. I have known him to play at cards with my father, meal-times excepted, literally all day long, in long days too, to save me from being teased by the old man, when I was not able to bear it.

God bless him for it, and God bless you, Southey.

C. L.

NOTE

[Southey's poem "The Spider" begins thus:—

TO A SPIDER

Spider! thou need'st not run in fear about
To shun my curious eyes;
I won't humanely crush thy bowels out
Lest thou should'st eat the flies;
Nor will I roast thee with a damn'd delight
Thy strange instinctive fortitude to see,
For there is One who might
One day roast me.

Thou art welcome to a Rhymer sore perplext,
The subject of his verse;
There's many a one who on a better text
Perhaps might comment worse.
Then shrink not, old Free-Mason, from my view,
But quietly like me spin out the line;
Do thou thy work pursue
As I will mine.

Weaver of snares, thou emblemest the ways
Of Satan, Sire of lies;
Hell's huge black Spider, for mankind he lays
His toils, as thou for flies.
When Betty's busy eye runs round the room,
Woe to that nice geometry, if seen!
But where is He whose broom
The earth shall clean?

"Hamuels and Zillahs . . ." Names in "The Rose."
Southey's "Holly Tree" begins—

O reader! hast thou ever stood to see
The Holly Tree?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glossy leaves
Order'd by an intelligence so wise
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Peter Pindar (Dr. John Wolcot) has an ode "To a Fly, taken out of a Bowl of Punch." He also wrote "The Lousiad."

"Poor earth-born companions." From Burns' "Lines to a Mouse," 2nd Stanza, line 5.

"Toads are made to fly." Filliping the toad was an old pastime. A toad was placed on one end of a piece of wood, laid crosswise over a stone. The other end was struck with a beetle (*i.e.*, a mallet), and the toad flew into the air. Falstaff says: "Fillip me with a three-man beetle." As to worms and fishermen, the late Mrs. Coe, who as a girl had known Lamb at Widford, told me that he could rarely, if ever, be tempted to join the anglers. Affixing the worm was too much for him. "Barbarous, barbarous," he used to say.

Lamb's project for a series of animal poems has to some extent been carried out by a living poet, Mr. A. C. Benson. Neither Lamb nor Southey pursued it.

We met Sam Le Grice in the letter of October 3, 1796 (see page 45). To what escapade Lamb refers I do not know, but he was addicted to folly. It was Sam Le Grice of whom Leigh Hunt in his *Autobiography* tells the excellent tale that he excused himself to his master for not having performed a task, by the remark that he had had a "lethargy."

In April of this year died John Lamb, the father. Charles Lamb probably at once moved from 45 Chapel Street to No. 36, where Mary Lamb joined him.

Between this and the next letter should probably come two letters from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, not available for this edition. One, which is undated, seems to follow upon Robert Lloyd's departure from Lamb's house. The letter remarks that Lamb knows but one being that he could ever consent to live perpetually with,

and that is Robert—but Robert must go whither prudence and paternal regulations dictate. Lamb also refers to a poem of an intimate character by Charles Lloyd in the *Annual Anthology* ("Lines to a Brother and Sister"), remarking that, in his opinion, these domestic addresses should not always be made public. There is also a reference to Charles Lloyd's novel, which Lamb says he wants to read if he may be permitted a sight of it. This would be *Isabel*.

The other letter, which may be earlier in date, treats of obedience to parental wish. Robert Lloyd seems to have objected to attend the meetings of the Society of Friends, of which he was a birthright member. Lamb bids him go; adding that, if his own parents were to live again, he would do more things to please them than merely sitting still a few hours in a week.

See Appendix II., page 965, for rest of the Letter 45.]

LETTER 46

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Oct. 31st, 1799.

DEAR Southey,—I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts, where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the county to you, as you have done by Devonshire, but alas! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bed-room, the "judgment of Solomon" composing one pannel, and "Actæon spying Diana naked" the other. I could tell of an old marble hall, with Hogarth's prints and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandam lie; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalised in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces and scenes of infancy.

I have given your address, and the books you want, to the Arches; they will send them as soon as they can get them, but they do not seem quite familiar to [? with] their names. I have seen Gebor! Gebor aptly so denominated from Geborish, *quasi* Gibberish. But Gebor hath some lucid intervals. I remember darkly one beautiful simile veiled in uncouth phrases about the youngest daughter of the Ark. I shall have nothing to communicate, I fear, to the Anthology.

You shall have some fragments of my play, if you desire them, but I think I would rather print it whole. Have you seen it, or shall I lend you a copy? I want your opinion of it.

I must get to business, so farewell. My kind remembrances to Edith. C. Lamb.

Note

[Lamb had probably been staying at Widford. Many years later he described his Hertfordshire days in more than one essay (see the *Elia* essays "Mackery End" and "Blakesmoor in H——shire" and "Dream-Children"). The old house was, of course, Blakesware (see note on page 746). The wilderness, which lay at the back of the house, is, with Widford, mentioned in *Rosamund Gray*.

The Arches were the brothers Arch, the booksellers of Ludgate Hill.

Gebor stands for *Gebir*, Landor's poem, published in 1798. The simile in question would be this: from Book VII., lines 248-251:—

> Never so eager, when the world was waves,
> Stood the less daughter of the ark, and tried
> (Innocent this temptation) to recall
> With folded vest and casting arm the dove.

Lamb quoted from *Gebir*, many years later, in his *Elia* essay "The Old Margate Hoy."

The reference to Southey's *Anthology* is to Vol. II., then in preparation. The play was now finished: it circulated in manuscript before being published in 1802.

In a letter to Robert Lloyd, dated December 17, 1799, Lamb thanks him for a present of porter, adding that wine makes him hot, and brandy drunk, but porter warms without intoxication.

Here should come an unpublished letter, in the possession of Mr. Bertram Dobell, from Lamb to Charles Lloyd at Cambridge, asking for the return of his play. Kemble, he says, had offered to put it in the hands of the proprietor of Drury Lane, and therefore Lamb wishes to have a second copy in the house. Kemble, as it turned out, returned no answer for a year, and then he stated that he had lost the copy.

Lamb mentions Coleridge's settlement with his family in lodgings in the Adelphi. Coleridge, having returned from Germany and undertaken work for the *Morning Post*, took lodgings at 21 Buckingham Street, Strand, close to the Adelphi, in November, 1799.

The letter is interesting in containing the first mention of Manning, whom we are now to meet.]

LETTER 47

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec., 1799.

DEAR Manning,—The particular kindness, even up to a degree of attachment, which I have experienced from you, seems to claim some distinct acknowledgment on my part. I could not content myself with a bare remembrance to you, conveyed in some letter to Lloyd.

Will it be agreeable to you, if I occasionally recruit your memory of me, which must else soon fade, if you consider the brief intercourse we have had. I am not likely to prove a troublesome correspondent. My scribbling days are past. I shall have no sentiments to communicate, but as they spring up from some living and worthy occasion.

I look forward with great pleasure to the performance of your promise, that we should meet in London early in the ensuing year. The century must needs commence auspiciously for me, that brings with it Manning's friendship as an earnest of its after gifts.

I should have written before, but for a troublesome inflammation in one of my eyes, brought on by night travelling with the coach windows sometimes up.

What more I have to say shall be reserved for a letter to Lloyd. I must not prove tedious to you in my first outset, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity.

I am, yours most sincerely, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[This is the first letter that has been preserved in the correspondence between Lamb and Manning. Lamb first met Manning at Cambridge, in the autumn of 1799, when on a visit to Charles Lloyd. Much of Manning's history will be unfolded as the letters proceed, but here it should be stated that he was born on November 8, 1772, and was thus a little more than two years older than Lamb. He was at this time acting as private tutor in mathematics at Cambridge, among his pupils being Charles Lloyd, of Caius, Manning's own college. Manning, however, did not take his degree, owing to an objection to oaths and tests.

Lamb's reference to the beginning of the century shows that he shared with many other non-mathematically-minded persons the belief that the century begins with the hundredth, and not the hundred and first, year. He says of Manning, in the *Elia* essay "The Old and the New Schoolmaster": "My friend M., with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second."]

LETTER 48

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 28th, 1799.

DEAR Manning,—Having suspended my correspondence a decent interval, as knowing that even good things may be taken to satiety, a wish cannot but recur to learn whether you be still well and happy. Do all things continue in the state I left them in Cambridge?

Do your night parties still flourish? and do you continue to bewilder your company with your thousand faces running down through all the keys of idiotism (like Lloyd over his perpetual harpsicord), from the smile and the glimmer of half-sense and quarter-sense to the grin and hanging lip of Betty Foy's own Johnny? And does the face-dissolving curfew sound at twelve? How unlike the great originals were your petty terrors in the postscript, not fearful enough to make a fairy shudder, or a Lilliputian fine lady, eight months full of child, miscarry. Yet one of them, which had more beast than the rest, I thought faintly resembled *one* of your brutifications. But, seriously, I long to see your own honest Manning-face again. I did not mean a pun,—your *man's* face, you will be apt to say, I know your wicked will to pun. I cannot now write to Lloyd and you too, so you must convey as much interesting intelligence as this may contain, or be thought to contain, to him and Sophia, with my dearest love and remembrances.

By the by, I think you and Sophia both incorrect with regard to the *title* of the *play*. Allowing your objection (which is not necessary, as pride may be, and is in real life often, cured by misfortunes not directly originating from its own acts, as Jeremy Taylor will tell you a naughty desire is sometimes sent to cure it—I know you read these *practical divines*). But allowing your objection, does not the betraying of his father's secret directly spring from pride?—from the pride of wine and a full heart, and a proud over-stepping of the ordinary rules of morality, and con-

tempt of the prejudices of mankind, which are not to bind superior souls—"as *trust* in *the matter* of *secret* all *ties* of *blood*, &c., &c., keeping of *promises*, the feeble mind's religion, binding our *morning knowledge* to the performance of what *last night's ignorance* spake"—does he not prate, that "*Great Spirits*" must do more than die for their friend—does not the pride of wine incite him to display some evidence of friendship, which its own irregularity shall make great? This I know, that I meant his punishment not alone to be a cure for his daily and habitual *pride*, but the direct consequence and appropriate punishment of a particular act of pride.

If you do not understand it so, it is my fault in not explaining my meaning.

I have not seen Coleridge since, and scarcely expect to see him, —perhaps he has been at Cambridge. [See page 965.]

Need I turn over to blot a fresh clean half-sheet? merely to say, what I hope you are sure of without my repeating it, that I would have you consider me, dear Manning, Your sincere friend,

C. LAMB.

What is your proper address?

NOTE

["Betty Foy's own Johnny"—"The Idiot Boy," in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

"In the postscript." A reference presumably to some drawings of faces in one of Manning's letters. For a reference to Manning's own power of acting and grimacing see the note on page 175.

"The title of the play." Writing to Lamb on December 15, 1799, Manning had said: "I had some conversation the other day with Sophia concerning your tragedy; and she made some very sensible observations (as I thought) with respect to the unfitness of its title, 'The Folly,' whose consequences humble the pride and ambition of John's heart, does not originate in the workings of those passions, but from an underpart in his character, and as it were accidentally, *viz.*, from the ebullitions of a drunken mind and from a rash confidence.

"You will understand what I mean, without my explaining myself any further. God bless you, and keep you from all evil things, that walk upon the face of the earth—I mean nightmares, hobgoblins and spectres." I take this and other passages in Manning's letters, from the originals, by permission of their present owner, Mr. Bertram Dobell.

Lamb refers in this letter particularly to Act III. of his play.

"I have not seen Coleridge since." Since when is not clear. Possibly Coleridge had been at Cambridge when Lamb was there.]

LETTER 49

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

? Jan. 23, 1800.

DEAR Coleridge,—Now I write, I cannot miss this opportunity of acknowledging the obligations myself, and the readers in general of that luminous paper, the "Morning Post," are under to you for the very novel and exquisite manner in which you combined political with grammatical science, in your yesterday's dissertation on Mr. Wyndham's unhappy composition. It must have been the death-blow to that ministry. I expect Pitt and Grenville to resign. More especially the delicate and Cottrellian grace with which you officiated, with a ferula for a white wand, as gentleman usher to the word "also," which it seems did not know its place.

I expect Manning of Cambridge in town to-night—will you fulfil your promise of meeting him at my house? He is a man of a thousand. Give me a line to say what day, whether Saturday, Sunday, Monday, &c., and if Sara and the Philosopher can come. I am afraid if I did not at intervals call upon you, I should *never see you*. But I forget, the affairs of the nation engross your time and your mind.

Farewell. C. L.

Note

[The first letter that has been preserved of the second period of Lamb's correspondence with Coleridge, which was to last until the end.

In the *Morning Post* of January 7, 1800, had appeared the correspondence between Buonaparte and Lord Grenville, in which Buonaparte made an offer of peace. Lord Grenville's Note, it was pointed out in the *Morning Post* for January 16, was really written by William Windham, Secretary for War, and on January 22 appeared an article closely criticising its grammar.

Here is the passage concerning "also," to which Lamb particularly alludes a little later in the letter:—

. . . "The *same* system, to the prevalence of which France justly ascribes all her present miseries, is that which has *also* involved the rest of Europe in a long and destructive warfare, of a nature long since unknown *to* the practice of civilized nations." Here the connective word "also" should have followed the word "Europe." As it at present stands, the sentence implies that France, miserable as she may be, has, however, not been involved in a warfare. The word "same" is absolutely expletive; and by appearing to refer the reader to some foregoing clause, it not only loads the sentence, but renders it obscure. The word "to" is absurdly

used for the word "in." A thing may be unknown *to* practitioners, as humanity and sincerity may be unknown to the practitioners of State-craft, and foresight, science, and harmony may have been unknown to the planners and practitioners of Continental Expeditions; but even "cheese-parings and candle-ends" cannot be known or unknown "*to*" a practice!!

Windham was destined to be attacked by another stalwart in Lamb's circle, for it was his speech in opposition to Lord Erskine's Cruelty to Animals Bill in 1809 that inspired John Lamb to write his fierce pamphlet (see page 412).

"Cottrellian grace." The Cotterells were Masters of the Ceremonies from 1641 to 1808.

The Philosopher was Hartley Coleridge, aged three, so called after his great namesake, David Hartley. The Coleridges were now, as we have seen, living at 21 Buckingham Street, Strand.]

LETTER 50

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. Feb. 13, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—Olivia is a good girl, and if you turn to my letter, you will find that this very plea you set up to vindicate Lloyd I had made use of as a reason why he should never have employed Olivia to make a copy of such a letter—a letter I could not have sent to my enemy's b——h, if she had thought fit to seek me in the way of marriage. But you see it in one view, I in another. Rest you merry in your opinion! Opinion is a species of property; and though I am always desirous to share with my friend to a certain extent, I shall ever like to keep some tenets and some property properly my own. Some day, Manning, when we meet, substituting Corydon and fair Amaryllis, for Charles Lloyd and Mary Hayes, we will discuss together this question of moral feeling, "In what cases and how far sincerity is a virtue?" I do not mean Truth—a good Olivia-like creature—God bless her, who, meaning no offence, is always ready to give an answer when she is asked why she did so and so; but a certain forward-talking half-brother of hers, Sincerity, that amphibious gentleman, who is so ready to perk up his obnoxious sentiments unasked into your notice, as Midas would his ears into your face uncalled for. But I despair of doing anything by a letter in the way of explaining or coming to explanations. A good wish, or a pun, or a piece of secret history, may be well enough that way conveyed; nay, it has been known that intelligence of a turkey hath been conveyed by that medium

without much ambiguity. Godwin I am a good deal pleased with. He is a very well-behaved, decent man, nothing very brilliant about him, or imposing, as you may suppose; quite another guess sort of gentleman from what your Anti-Jacobin Christians imagine him. I was well pleased to find he has neither horns nor claws; quite a tame creature, I assure you. A middle-sized man, both in stature and in understanding; whereas, from his noisy fame, you would expect to find a Briareus Centimanus, or a Tityus tall enough to pull Jupiter from his heavens.

I begin to think you Atheists not quite so tall a species. Coleridge inquires after you pretty often. I wish to be the Pandar to bring you together again once before I die. When we die, you and I must part; the sheep, you know, take the right hand, and the goats the left. Stripped of its allegory, you must know, the sheep are *I* and the Apostles, and the Martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor, and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, &c., &c.; the goats are the Atheists and the Adulterers, and dumb dogs, and Godwin and M.....g, and that Thyestæan crew—yaw! how my saintship sickens at the idea!

You shall have my play and the Falstaff letters in a day or two. I will write to Lloyd by this day's post.

Pray, is it a part of your sincerity to show my letters to Lloyd? for really, gentlemen ought to explain their virtues upon a first acquaintance, to prevent mistakes.

God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling;* and believe me, seriously and deeply,

Your well-wisher and friend,

C. L.

NOTE

[Mary Hayes was a friend of Mary Wollstonecraft, and also of Southey and Coleridge. She wrote a novel, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, which Lloyd says contained her own love letters to Godwin and Froud, and also *Female Biography, or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women*. Lloyd and she had been very intimate. A passage from a letter of Coleridge to Southey, dated January 25, 1800, bears upon the present situation: "Miss Hayes I have seen. Charles Lloyd's conduct has been atrocious beyond what you stated. Lamb himself confessed to me that during the time in which he kept up his ranting, sentimental correspondence with Miss Hayes, he frequently read her letters in company, as a subject for *laughter*, and then sate down and answered them quite *à la Rousseau!* Poor Lloyd! Every hour new-creates him; he is his own posterity in a perpetually flowing series, and his body unfortunately retaining an external identity, *their* mutual

contradictions and disagreeings are united under one name, and of course are called lies, treachery, and rascality!" See a further note in Appendix II., page 966.

"My enemy's b——h." A recollection, I fear, of King Lear's remark (IV., 7, 36).

Lamb had just met William Godwin (1756-1836), probably having been introduced to him by Coleridge. Godwin, known chiefly by his *Political Justice*, 1793; *Caleb Williams*, 1794, and *St. Leon*, 1799, stood at that time for everything that was advanced in thought and conduct. We shall meet with him often in the correspondence of the next few years.

Briareus Centimanus, the giant with a hundred hands, who defended Jupiter against Juno, Neptune and Minerva. Tityus covered nine acres of ground when he slept.

Bishop Horsley (then of Rochester, afterwards St. Asaph's) was probably included ironically, on account of his hostility to Priestley.]

LETTER 51

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. March 1, 1800.]

I HOPE by this time you are prepared to say the "Falstaff's letters" are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours, of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you, that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas, that now lie ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, dig, Manning! I set to with an unconquerable propulsion to write, with a lamentable want of what to write. My private goings on are orderly as the movements of the spheres, and stale as their music to angels' ears. Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private, I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in. I grieve, indeed, that War and Nature, and Mr. Pitt, that hangs up in Lloyd's best parlour, should have conspired to call up three necessaries, simple commoners as our fathers knew them, into the upper house of Luxuries; Bread, and Beer, and Coals, Manning. But as to France and Frenchmen, and the Abbé Sièyes and his constitutions, I cannot make these present times present to me. I read histories of the past, and I live in them; although, to abstract senses, they are far less momentous than the noises which keep Europe awake. I am reading Burnet's Own Times. Did you

ever read that garrulous, pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions, when his "old cap was new." Full of scandal, which all true history is. No palliatives, but all the stark wickedness, that actually gives the *momentum* to national actors. Quite the prattle of age and out-lived importance. Truth and sincerity staring out upon you perpetually in *alto relievo*. Himself a party man—he makes you a party man. None of the Damned philosophical Humeian indifference, so cold, and unnatural, and inhuman! None of the damned Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite. None of Mr. Robertson's periods with three members. None of Mr. Roscoe's sage remarks, all so apposite, and coming in so clever, lest the reader should have had the trouble of drawing an inference. Burnet's good old prattle I can bring present to my mind—I can make the revolution present to me; the French Revolution, by a converse perversity in my nature, I fling as far *from* me. To quit this damn'd subject, and to relieve you from two or three dismal yawns, which I hear in spirit, I here conclude my more than commonly obtuse letter; dull up to the dulness of a Dutch commentator on Shakspeare.

My love to Lloyd and Sophia. C. L.

NOTE

["War and Nature, and Mr. Pitt." The war had sent up taxation to an almost unbearable height. Pitt was Chancellor of Exchequer, as well as Prime Minister.

Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Times* was published in 1723, 1734, after his death. His times were 1643-1715.

"When this 'old cap was new'" is the first line of a quaint old ballad called "Time's Alteration; or, The Old Man's Rehearsal, What brave days he knew, A great while agone, When his Old Cap was new." It is by Martin Parker (d. 1656) and is reprinted in the *British Anthology* (ed. Arber, published by Frowde), Vol. V., from the original broadside in the British Museum. It consists of thirteen stanzas of eight lines each, every stanza ending with the line "When this old cap was new."

Hume, Gibbon and Robertson were among the books which, in the *Elia* essay "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading," Lamb described as *biblia-a-biblia*. William Roscoe's principal work was his *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*, 1795.]

LETTER 52

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. March 17, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks, and the more I see of him in the quotidian undress and relaxation of his mind, the more cause I see to love him, and believe him a *very good man*, and all those foolish impressions to the contrary fly off like morning slumbers. He is engaged in translations, which I hope will keep him this month to come. He is uncommonly kind and friendly to me. He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amidst all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his young *tulip*. Marry come up! what a pretty similitude, and how like your humble servant! He has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me for a first plan the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton the anatomist of melancholy. I have even written the introductory letter; and, if I can pick up a few guineas this way, I feel they will be most *refreshing*, bread being so dear. If I go on with it, I will apprise you of it, as you may like to see my things! and the *tulip*, of all flowers, loves to be admired most.

Pray pardon me, if my letters do not come very thick. I am so taken up with one thing or other, that I cannot pick out (I will not say time, but) fitting times to write to you. My dear love to Lloyd and Sophia, and pray split this thin letter into three parts, and present them with the *two biggest* in my name.

They are my oldest friends; but ever the new friend driveth out the old, as the ballad sings! God bless you all three! I would hear from Lloyd, if I could.

C. L.

Flour has just fallen nine shillings a sack! we shall be all too rich.

Tell Charles I have seen his Mamma, and ham almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete Matron-Lady-Quaker. She has given me two little books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and thinner than she was.

But I have not time to fall in love.

Mary presents her *general compliments*. She keeps in fine health!

Huzza! boys,
and down with the Atheists.

NOTE

[Coleridge, having sent his wife and Hartley into the country, had, for a while, taken up his abode with Lamb at Pentonville, and given up the *Morning Post* in order to proceed with his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*. Lamb's forgery of Burton, together with those mentioned in the next letter, which were never printed by Stuart, for whom they were written, was included in the *John Woodvil* volume, 1802, among the "Curious Fragments, extracted from a commonplace book, which belonged to Robert Burton, the famous Author of The Anatomy of Melancholy." See the *Miscellaneous Prose*, Vol. I. of this edition.

"They are my oldest friends." Coleridge and Southey were, of course, older. The ballad I have not found.

Mrs. Charles Lloyd, sen., *née* Mary Farmer, and Olivia, her second daughter, had been staying in London. Lamb had breakfasted with them.

The reference to Atheists is explained by a passage from Manning's letter to Lamb in March, 1800: "One thing tho' I must beg of you—that is not to call me Atheist in your letters—for though it may be mere raillery in *you*, and not meant as a serious imputation on my Faith, yet, if the Catholic or any other intolerant religion should [illegible] and become established in England, (which [illegible] if the Bishop of R——r may be the case) and if the post-people should happen to open and read your letters, (which, considering the sometimes quaintness of their form, they may possibly be incited to do) such names might send me to Smithfield on a hurdle,—and nothing *upon earth* is more discordant to my wishes, than to become one of the Smithfield Illuminati."]

LETTER 53

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. April 5, 1800.]

C. L.'s moral sense presents her compliments to Doctor Manning, is very thankful for his medical advice, but is happy to add that her disorder has died of itself.

Dr. Manning, Coleridge has left us, to go into the north, on a visit to his god Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects of engagement with the "Morning Post," all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal. In truth, I wonder

you took it up so seriously. All my intention was but to make a little sport with such public and fair game as Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Devil, &c.—gentry dipped in Styx all over, whom no paper javelin-lings can touch. To have made free with these cattle, where was the harm? 'twould have been but giving a polish to lampblack, not nigrifying a negro primarily. After all, I cannot but regret my involuntary virtue. Damn virtue that's thrust upon us; it behaves itself with such constraint, till conscience opens the window and lets out the goose.

I had struck off two imitations of Burton, quite abstracted from any modern allusions, which it was my intent only to lug in from time to time to make 'em popular. Stuart has got these, with an introductory letter; but, not hearing from him, I have ceased from my labours, but I write to him to-day to get a final answer. I am afraid they won't do for a paper. Burton is a scarce gentleman, not much known; else I had done 'em pretty well.

I have also hit off a few lines in the name of Burton, being a conceit of "Diabolic Possession." Burton was a man often assoiled by deepest melancholy, and at other times much given to laughing and jesting, as is the way with melancholy men. I will send them you: they were almost extempore, and no great things; but you will indulge them. Robert Lloyd is come to town. He is a good fellow, with the best heart, but his feelings are shockingly *un*sane. Priscilla meditates going to see Pizarro at Drury Lane to-night (from her uncle's) under cover of coming to dine with me . . . *heu! tempora! heu! mores!*—I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute.—Yours as usual.

C. L.

NOTE

[For Coleridge's movements see note to the next letter.—"Pizarro" was Sheridan's drama. It was acted this season, 1799-1800, sixty-seven times.—"*Heu tempora! heu mores!*"—a reference to the new Quaker and the old. See Appendix II., page 966, for Lamb's next letter to Manning.]

LETTER 54

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably April 16 or 17, 1800.]

I SEND you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss Wesley;

the woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue, but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips and forget to answer it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon "Realities." We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss Wesley and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss Wesley, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off, by that simple expedient of referring her to you; but there are more burrs in the wind. I came home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of *the author but hunger* about me, and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss Wesley, one Miss Benje, or Benjey—I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. "The rogue has given me potions to make me love him." Well; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had never seen her before, and could not tell who the devil it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two pairs of stairs in East Street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake I much love. We sat down. Presently Miss Benje broke the silence, by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from D'Israeli, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of organization. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ; but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French,—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry; where I, who had hitherto sat mute and a hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that

it was my own trade in a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion, that no good poetry had appeared since Dr. Johnson's time. It seems the Doctor has suppressed many hopeful geniuses that way by the severity of his critical strictures in his "Lives of the Poets." I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured "it was certainly the case." Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr. Gregory, another of Miss Benjey's friends, has found fault with one of Miss More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself—in the opinion of Miss Benjey, not without success. It seems the Doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates against the authority of Shakspeare himself. We next discussed the question, whether Pope was a poet? I find Dr. Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of "Pizarro," and Miss Benjey or Benje advised Mary to take two of them home; she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them *verbatim;* which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Miss Porters, who, it seems, have heard much of Mr. Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

Pray let us have no more complaints about shadows. We are in a fair way, *through you*, to surfeit sick upon them.

Our loves and respects to your host and hostess. Our dearest love to Coleridge.

Take no thought about your proof-sheets; they shall be done as if Woodfall himself did them. Pray send us word of Mrs. Coleridge and little David Hartley, your little reality.

Farewell, dear Substance. Take no umbrage at any thing I have written.

C. LAMB, *Umbra.*

Land of Shadows,
Shadow-month the 16th or 17th, 1800.

Coleridge, I find loose among your papers a copy of "*Christabel.*" It wants about thirty lines; you will very much oblige me by sending me the beginning as far as that line,—

"And the spring comes slowly up this way;"

and the intermediate lines between—

"The lady leaps up suddenly,
The lovely Lady Christabel;"

and the lines,—

"She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak."

The trouble to you *will be small*, and the benefit to us *very great!* A pretty antithesis! A figure in speech I much applaud.

Godwin has called upon us. He spent one evening here. Was very friendly. Kept us up till midnight. Drank punch, and talked about you. He seems, above all men, mortified at your going away. Suppose you were to write to that good-natured heathen—"or is he a *shadow?*" If I do not *write*, impute it to the long postage, of which you have so much cause to complain. I have scribbled over a *queer letter*, as I find by perusal; but it means no mischief.

I am, and will be, yours ever, in sober sadness,

C. L.

Write your *German* as plain as sunshine, for that must correct itself. You know I am homo unius linguæ: in English, illiterate, a dunce, a ninny.

NOTE

[Having left Lamb Coleridge went to Grasmere, where he stayed at Dove Cottage with Wordsworth and finished his translation, which was ready for the printer on April 22. To what Lamb alludes in his reference to the homily on "Realities" I cannot say, but presumably Coleridge had written a metaphysical letter on this subject. Lamb returns to the matter at the end of the first part of his reply.

Miss Wesley was Sarah Wesley (1760-1828), the daughter of Charles Wesley and, therefore, niece of the great John and Samuel. She moved much in literary society. Miss Benjay, or Benjé, was in reality Elizabeth Ogilvy Benger (1778-1827), a friend of Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Barbauld and the Aikins, and other literary people. Madame de Stael called her the most interesting woman she had met in England. She wrote novels and poems and biographies. In those days there were two East Streets, one leading from Red Lion Square to Lamb's Conduit Street, and one in the neighbourhood of Clare Market.

"The rogue has given me potions . . ." *Falstaff.* "If the rascal have not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged" (1 "Henry IV.," II., 2, 18, etc.).

D'Israeli was Isaac Disraeli, the author of *The Curiosities of Literature* and other books about books and authors; Miss

More was Hannah More, and her book, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 1799; Dr. Gregory I have not traced; Miss Seward was Anna Seward, the Swan of Lichfield; and the Miss Porters were Jane and Anna Maria, authors (later) respectively of *The Scottish Chiefs* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and *The Hungarian Brothers*.

The proof-sheets were those of *Wallenstein*. Henry Sampson Woodfall was the famous printer of the *Letters of Junius*.

Christabel, Coleridge's poem, had been begun in 1797; it was finished, in so far as it was finished, later in the year 1800. It was published first in 1816.

"*Homo unius linguæ*." Lamb exaggerated here. He had much Latin, a little Greek and apparently (see page 29) a little French (see, however, also page 243). The sentence is in the manner of Burton, whom Lamb had been imitating.]

LETTER 55

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[? Spring, 1800.]

BY some fatality, unusual with me, I have mislaid the list of books which you want. Can you, from memory, easily supply me with another?

I confess to Statius, and I detained him wilfully, out of a reverent regard to your style. Statius, they tell me, is turgid. As to that other Latin book, since you know neither its name nor subject, your wants (I crave leave to apprehend) cannot be very urgent. Meanwhile, dream that it is one of the lost Decades of Livy.

Your partiality to me has led you to form an erroneous opinion as to the measure of delight you suppose me to take in obliging. Pray, be careful that it spread no further. 'Tis one of those heresies that is very pregnant. Pray, rest more satisfied with the portion of learning which you have got, and disturb my peaceful ignorance as little as possible with such sort of commissions.

Did you never observe an appearance well known by the name of the man in the moon? Some scandalous old maids have set on foot a report that it is Endymion. Dr. Stoddart talks of going out King's Advocate to Malta. He has studied the Civil and Canon Law just three canon months, to my knowledge. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

Your theory about the first awkward step a man makes being the consequence of learning to dance, is not universal. We have known many youths bred up at Christ's, who never learned to dance, yet the

world imputes to them no very graceful motions. I remember there was little Hudson, the immortal precentor of St. Paul's, to teach us our quavers: but, to the best of my recollection, there was no master of motions when we were at Christ's.

Farewell, in haste. C. L.

NOTE

[Talfourd does not date this letter, merely remarking that it belongs to the present period. Canon Ainger dated it June 22, 1800; but this I think cannot be right when we take into consideration Letter 60 and what it says about Lamb's last letter to Coleridge (clearly that of May 12), and the time that has since elapsed. The birth of Charles Lloyd's first child, July 31, gives us the latest date to which Letter 60 could belong.

Statius, the Latin poet, was the author of the *Thebais* and *Sylvæ*. Livy's works have been divided in fourteen decades, of which many are lost.

"*Fiat justitia.*" Let justice be done though the heavens fall.

"Your theory . . ." This may have been contained in one of Coleridge's letters, now lost; I do not find it in any of the known *Morning Post* articles.]

LETTER 56

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Monday, May 12th, 1800.

MY dear Coleridge—I don't know why I write, except from the propensity misery has to tell her griefs. Hetty died on Friday night, about eleven o'clock, after eight days' illness; Mary, in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, is fallen ill again, and I was obliged to remove her yesterday. I am left alone in a house with nothing but Hetty's dead body to keep me company. To-morrow I bury her, and then I shall be quite alone, with nothing but a cat to remind me that the house has been full of living beings like myself. My heart is quite sunk, and I don't know where to look for relief. Mary will get better again; but her constantly being liable to such relapses is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner *marked*. Excuse my troubling you; but I have nobody by me to speak to me. I slept out last night, not being able to endure the change and the stillness. But I did not sleep well, and I must come back to my own bed. I am going to try and get a friend to come and be with me to-morrow. I

am completely shipwrecked. My head is quite bad. I almost wish that Mary were dead.—God bless you! Love to Sara and Hartley.

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Hetty was the Lambs' aged servant.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Thomas Manning clearly written on May 12, 1800, the same day as that to Coleridge, stating that Lamb has given up his house, and is looking for lodgings,—White (with whom he had stayed) having "all kindness but not sympathy".]

LETTER 57

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. May 20, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—I feel myself unable to thank you sufficiently for your kind letter. It was doubly acceptable to me, both for the choice poetry and the kind honest prose which it contained. It was just such a letter as I should have expected from Manning.

I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. I have had a very eligible offer to lodge with a friend in town. He will have rooms to let at midsummer, by which time I hope my sister will be well enough to join me. It is a great object to me to live in town, where we shall be much more *private*, and to quit a house and neighbourhood where poor Mary's disorder, so frequently recurring, has made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London. We shall be in a family where we visit very frequently; only my landlord and I have not yet come to a conclusion. He has a partner to consult. I am still on the tremble, for I do not know where we could go into lodgings that would not be, in many respects, highly exceptionable. Only God send Mary well again, and I hope all will be well! The prospect, such as it is, has made me quite happy. I have just time to tell you of it, as I know it will give you pleasure.—Farewell.

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Manning's letter containing the choice poetry has not been preserved.

The friend in town was John Mathew Gutch (1776-1861), with whom Lamb had been at school at Christ's Hospital, who was now a law stationer, in partnership with one Anderson, at 27 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, since demolished.]

LETTER 58

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date. ? May 25, 1800.]

DEAR Manning, I am a letter in your debt, but I am scarcely rich enough (in spirits) to pay you.—I am writing at an inn on the Ware road, in the neighbourhood of which I am going to pass two days, being Whitsuntide.—Excuse the pen, tis the best I can get.—Poor Mary is very bad yet. I went yesterday hoping I should see her getting well, then I might have come into the country more chearful, but I could not get to see her. This has been a sad damp. Indeed I never in my life have been more wretched than I was all day yesterday. I am glad I am going away from business for a little while, for my head has been hot and ill. I shall be very much alone where I am going, which always revives me. I hope you will accept of this worthless memento, which I merely send as a token that I am in your debt. I will write upon my return, on Thursday at farthest. I return on Wednesday.—

God bless you.

I was afraid you would think me forgetful, and that made me scribble this jumble.

Sunday.

NOTE

[Here probably also should come an unpublished letter (in the possession of Mr. Dobell) from Lamb to Manning, in which Lamb remarks that his goddess is Pecunia.

Mr. Dobell also has another letter to Manning belonging to the same period, in which Lamb returns to the subject of poverty:—

"You dropt a word whether in jest or earnest, as if you would join me in some work, such as a review or series of papers, essays, or anything.—Were you serious? I want home occupation, & I more want money. Had you any scheme, or was it, as G. Dyer says, en passant? If I don't have a Legacy left me shortly I must get into pay with some newspaper for small gains. Mutton is twelvepence a pound."

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, in which he describes a visit to Gutch's family at Oxford, and mentions his admiration for a fine head of Bishop Taylor in All Souls' Library, which was an inducement to the Oxford visit. He refers to Charles Lloyd's settlement in the Lakes, and suggests that it may be the means of again uniting him and Coleridge; adding that such men as Coleridge and Wordsworth would exclude solitude in the Hebrides or Thule.

The following undated letter, which may be placed a little too soon in its present position, comes with a certain fitness here:—]

LETTER 59

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

[No date. 1800.]

DEAR Gutch, Anderson is not come home, and I am almost afraid to tell you what has happen'd, lest it should seem to have happend by my fault in not writing for you home sooner.—

This morning Henry, the eldest lad, was missing. We supposd he was only gone out on a morning's stroll, and that he would return, but he did not return & we discovered that he had opened your desk before he went, & I suppose taken all the money he could find, for on diligent search I could find none, and on opening your Letter to Anderson, which I thought necessary to get at the key, I learn that you had a good deal of money there.

Several people have been here after you to-day, & the boys seem quite frightened, and do not know what to do. In particular, one gentleman wants to have some writings finished by Tuesday— For God's sake set out by the first coach. Mary has been crying all day about it, and I am now just going to some law stationer in the neighbourhood, that the eldest boy has recommended, to get him to come and be in the house for a day or so, to manage. I cannot think what detains Anderson. His sister is quite frightend about him. I am very sorry I did not write yesterday, but Henry persuaded me to wait till he could ascertain when some job must be done (at the furthest) for Mr. Foulkes, and as nothing had occurrd besides I did not like to disturb your pleasures. I now see my error, and shall be heartily ashamed to see you.

[*That is as far as the letter goes on the first page. We then turn over, and find (as Gutch, to his immense relief, found before us) written right across both pages:*]

A Bite!!!

Anderson is come home, and the wheels of thy business are going on as ever. The boy is honest, and I am thy friend.

And how does the coach-maker's daughter? Thou art her Phaeton, her Gig, and her Sociable. Commend me to Rob.

C. Lamb.

Saturday.

Note

[This letter is the first example extant of Lamb's tendency to hoaxing. Gutch was at that time courting a Miss Wheeley, the

daughter of a Birmingham coachbuilder. It was while he was in Birmingham that Lamb wrote the letter. Anderson was his partner in business. Rob would be Robert Lloyd, then at Birmingham again. This, and one other, are the only letters of Lamb to Gutch that escaped destruction.]

LETTER 60

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[? Late July, 1800.]

DEAR Coleridge,—Soon after I wrote to you last, an offer was made me by Gutch (you must remember him? at Christ's—you saw him, slightly, one day with Thomson at our house)—to come and lodge with him at his house in Southampton Buildings, Chancery-Lane. This was a very comfortable offer to me, the rooms being at a reasonable rent, and including the use of an old servant, besides being infinitely preferable to ordinary lodgings *in our case*, as you must perceive. As Gutch knew all our story and the perpetual liability to a recurrence in my sister's disorder, probably to the end of her life, I certainly think the offer very generous and very friendly. I have got three rooms (including servant) under £84 a year. Here I soon found myself at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was well enough to join me. So we are once more settled. I am afraid we are not placed out of the reach of future interruptions. But I am determined to take what snatches of pleasure we can between the acts of our distressful drama. . . . I have passed two days at Oxford on a visit, which I have long put off, to Gutch's family. The sight of the Bodleian Library and, above all, a fine bust of Bishop Taylor at All Souls', were particularly gratifying to me; unluckily, it was not a family where I could take Mary with me, and I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in any pleasures I take without *her*. She never goes anywhere. I do not know what I can add to this letter. I hope you are better by this time; and I desire to be affectionately remembered to Sara and Hartley.

I expected before this to have had tidings of another little philosopher. Lloyd's wife is on the point of favouring the world.

Have you seen the new edition of Burns? his posthumous works and letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume, which contains his life—very confusedly and badly written, and interspersed with dull pathological and *medical* discussions. It

is written by a Dr. Currie. Do you know the well-meaning doctor? Alas, *ne sutor ultra crepitum!* [*A few words omitted here.*]

I hope to hear again from you very soon. Godwin is gone to Ireland on a visit to Grattan. Before he went I passed much time with him, and he has showed me particular attentions: N.B. A thing I much like. Your books are all safe: only I have not thought it necessary to fetch away your last batch, which I understand are at Johnson's the bookseller, who has got quite as much room, and will take as much care of them as myself—and you can send for them immediately from him.

I wish you would advert to a letter I sent you at Grasmere about "Christabel," and comply with my request contained therein.

Love to all friends round Skiddaw. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The Coleridges had recently moved into Greta Hall, Keswick.

Thomson would, I think, be Marmaduke Thompson, an old Christ's Hospitaller, to whom Lamb dedicated *Rosamund Gray*. He became a missionary.

"Another little philosopher." Derwent Coleridge was born September 14, 1800. Lloyd's eldest son, Charles Grosvenor Lloyd, was born July 31, 1800.

Dr. James Currie's Life of Burns was prefixed to an edition of his poems in 1800. Dugald Stewart called it "a strong and faithful picture." It was written to raise funds for Burns' widow and family.

"*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*" is a phrase in Pliny, Valerius Maximus, and possibly other Latin writers. "Let the cobbler stick to his last." The translation of Lamb's version has to be omitted.

Godwin had gone to stay with Curran: he saw much of Grattan also.

Johnson, the publisher and bookseller, lived at 72 St. Paul's Churchyard. He published Priestley's works.]

LETTER 61

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Aug. 6th, 1800.

DEAR Coleridge,—I have taken to-day, and delivered to Longman and Co., *Imprimis:* your books, viz., three ponderous German dictionaries, one volume (I can find no more) of German and French ditto, sundry other German books unbound, as you left

them, Percy's Ancient Poetry, and one volume of Anderson's Poets. I specify them, that you may not lose any. *Secundo:* a dressing-gown (value, fivepence), in which you used to sit and look like a conjuror, when you were translating "Wallenstein." A case of two razors and a shaving-box and strap. This it has cost me a severe struggle to part with. They are in a brown-paper parcel, which also contains sundry papers and poems, sermons, *some few Epic* Poems,—one about Cain and Abel, which came from Poole, &c., &c., and also your tragedy; with one or two small German books, and that drama in which Got-fader performs. *Tertio:* a small oblong box containing *all your letters*, collected from all your waste papers, and which fill the said little box. All other waste papers, which I judged worth sending, are in the paper parcel aforesaid. But you will find *all* your letters in the box by themselves. Thus have I discharged my conscience and my lumber-room of all your property, save and except a folio entitled Tyrrell's Bibliotheca Politica, which you used to learn your politics out of when you wrote for the Post, *mutatis mutandis*, *i.e.*, applying past inferences to modern *data*. I retain that, because I am sensible I am very deficient in the politics myself; and I have torn up—don't be angry, waste paper has risen forty per cent., and I can't afford to buy it—all Buonaparte's Letters, Arthur Young's Treatise on Corn, and one or two more light-armed infantry, which I thought better suited the flippancy of London discussion than the dignity of Keswick thinking. Mary says you will be in a damned passion about them when you come to miss them; but you must study philosophy. Read Albertus Magnus de Chartis Amissis five times over after phlebotomising,—'tis Burton's recipe—and then be angry with an absent friend if you can. I have just heard that Mrs. Lloyd is delivered of a fine boy, and mother and boy are doing well. Fie on sluggards, what is thy Sara doing? Sara is obscure. Am I to understand by her letter, that she sends a *kiss* to Eliza Buckingham? Pray tell your wife that a note of interrogation on the superscription of a letter is highly ungrammatical—she proposes writing my name *Lamb?* Lambe is quite enough. I have had the Anthology, and like only one thing in it, *Lewti;* but of that the last stanza is detestable, the rest most exquisite!—the epithet *enviable* would dash the finest poem. For God's sake (I never was more serious), don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses. It did well enough five years ago when I came to see you, and was moral coxcomb enough at the time you wrote the lines, to feed upon such epithets; but, besides that, the meaning of gentle is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited, the very quality of gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpetings. My *sentiment* is long since vanished. I hope my *virtues* have done *sucking*. I can scarce think but

you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to think that you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer.

I have hit off the following in imitation of old English poetry, which, I imagine, I am a dab at. The measure is unmeasureable; but it most resembles that beautiful ballad of the "Old and Young Courtier;" and in its feature of taking the extremes of two situations for just parallel, it resembles the old poetry certainly. If I could but stretch out the circumstances to twelve more verses, *i.e.*, if I had as much genius as the writer of that old song, I think it would be excellent. It was to follow an imitation of Burton in prose, which you have not seen. But fate "and wisest Stewart" say No.

I can send you 200 pens and six quires of paper *immediately*, if they will answer the carriage by coach. It would be foolish to pack 'em up *cum multis libris et cæteris*,—they would all spoil. I only wait your commands to coach them. I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.'s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and seen so little—only what I saw at Stowey. Pray give me an order in writing on Longman for "Lyrical Ballads." I have the first volume, and, truth to tell, six shillings is a broad shot. I cram all I can in, to save a multiplying of letters—those pretty comets with swingeing tails.

I'll just crowd in God bless you! C. Lamb.

Wednesday night.

Note

[The epic about Cain and Abel was "The Wanderings of Cain," which Coleridge projected but never finished. The drama in which Got-fader performs would be perhaps "Faust"—"Der Herr" in the Prologue—or some old miracle play.

"'Tis Burton's recipe." Lamb was just now steeped in the *Anatomy;* but there is no need to see if Burton says this.

"Eliza Buckingham." Sara Coleridge's message was probably intended for Eliza, a servant at the Buckingham Street lodgings.

Lambe was *The Anti-Jacobin's* idea of Lamb's name; and indeed many persons adhered to it to the end. Mrs. Coleridge, when writing to her husband under care of Lamb at the India House, added "e" to Lamb's name to signify that the letter was for Coleridge. Wordsworth later also had some of his letters addressed in the same way.

Coleridge's "Lewti" was reprinted, with alterations, from the *Morning Post*, in the *Annual Anthology*, Vol. II. Line 69 ran—

Had I the enviable power;

Coleridge changed this to—

Voice of the Night! had I the power.

"This Lime-tree Bower my Prison; a Poem, addressed to Charles Lamb of the India House, London," was also in the *Annual Anthology*. Lamb objected to the phrase "My gentle-hearted Charles" (see page 98; see also Lamb's letter of August 14, page 177). Lamb says "five years ago"; he means three. Coleridge did not alter the phrase. It was against this poem that he wrote in pencil on his deathbed in 1834: "Ch. and Mary Lamb—dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my heart.—S. T. C. Aet. 63, 1834. 1797-1834 = 37 years!"

"I have hit off the following"—"A Ballad Denoting the Difference between the Rich and the Poor," first printed among the Imitations of Burton in the *John Woodvil* volume, 1802:—

A BALLAD:

NOTING THE DIFFERENCE OF RICH AND POOR, IN THE WAYS OF A RICH MAN'S PALACE AND A POOR MAN'S WORKHOUSE

To the tune of the "Old and Young Courtier"

In a costly palace Youth goes clad in gold;
In a wretched workhouse Age's limbs are cold:
There they sit, the old men, by a shivering fire,
Still close and closer cowering, warmth is their desire.

In a costly palace, when the brave gallants dine,
They have store of good venison, with old Canary wine,
With singing and music to heighten the cheer;
Coarse bits, with grudging, are the pauper's best fare.

In a costly palace Youth is still carest
By a train of attendants which laugh at my young Lord's jest;
In a wretched workhouse the contrary prevails:
Does Age begin to prattle? No man heark'neth to his tales.

In a costly palace, if the child with a pin
Do but chance to prick a finger, straight the Doctor is called in;
In a wretched workhouse, men are left to perish
For want of proper cordials, which their old age might cherish.

In a costly palace Youth enjoys his lust;
In a wretched workhouse Age, in corners thrust,
Thinks upon the former days, when he was well to do,
Had children to stand by him, both friends and kinsmen too.

In a costly palace Youth his temples hides
With a new devised peruke that reaches to his sides;
In a wretched workhouse Age's crown is bare,
With a few thin locks, just to fence out the cold air.

In peace, as in war, 'tis our young gallants' pride
To walk, each one i' the streets, with a rapier at his side,
That none to do them injury may have pretence;
Wretched Age, in poverty, must brook offence.

"And wisest Stewart"—Stuart of the *Morning Post*. Adapted from Milton's "Hymn on the Nativity"—

But wisest Fate says no.

"W.'s [Wordsworth's] tragedy" was "The Borderers." The second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was just ready.]

LETTER 62

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. August 9, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—I suppose you have heard of Sophia Lloyd's good fortune, and paid the customary compliments to the parents. Heaven keep the new-born infant from star-blasting and moon-blasting, from epilepsy, marasmus, and the devil! May he live to see many days, and they good ones; some friends, and they pretty regular correspondents, with as much wit as wisdom as will eat their bread and cheese together under a poor roof without quarrelling; as much goodness as will earn heaven! Here I must leave off, my benedictory powers failing me. I could *curse* the sheet full; so much stronger is corruption than grace in the Natural Man.

And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again—your fine *dogmatical sceptical* face, by punch-light? O! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence—yea, of more worth than all the letters that have sweated the fingers of sensibility from Madame Sévigné and Balzac (observe my Larning!) to Sterne and Shenstone.

Coleridge is settled with his wife and the young philosopher at Keswick with the Wordsworths. They have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary world*. George Dyer too, that good-natured heathen, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse—Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. I find he means to exclude "personal satire," so it appears by his truly original advertisement. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for He never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

Now farewell: for dinner is at hand. C. L.

NOTE

[Southey's letters contain a glimpse (as Mr. J. A. Rutter has pointed out) of Lamb and Manning by punch-light. Writing in 1824, describing a certain expression of Mrs. Coleridge's face, Southey says:—

First, then, it was an expression of dolorous alarm, such as Le Brun ought to have painted: but such as Manning never could have equalled, when, while Mrs.

Lloyd was keeping her room in child-bed, he and Charles Lamb sate drinking punch in the room below till three in the morning—Manning acting Le Brun's passions (punchified at the time), and Charles Lamb (punchified also) roaring aloud and swearing, while the tears ran down his cheeks, that it required more genius than even Shakespeare possessed to personate them so well; Charles Lloyd the while (not punchified) praying and entreating them to go to bed, and not disturb his wife by the uproar they were making.

Southey's reminiscence, though interesting, is very confusing. Lamb does not seem to have visited Cambridge between the end of 1799 and January 5, 1800. At the latter date the Lloyds were in the north. Possibly Southey refers to an earlier illness of Mrs. Lloyd, which, writing after a long interval, he confused with confinement.

"Balzac." Not, of course, the novelist; but Jean Louis Guez de Balzac (1594-1654) the letter-writer.

Two or three lines have been omitted from this letter.]

LETTER 63

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. August 11, 1800.]

MY dear fellow (*N.B.* mighty familiar of late!) for me to come to Cambridge now is one of God Almighty's impossibilities. Metaphysicians tell us, even He can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and cool himself in "green retreats" all the month of August.

But for you to come to London instead!—muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aqua-vitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after-dinner trick I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, if mathematically divided, gives 1¼ for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

"Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause."
Twenty-first Sonnet.

And elsewhere,—

"What neat repast shall feast us, light[1] and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine,[2] whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?"

Indeed, the poets are full of this pleasing morality—

"Veni cito, Domine Manning!"

Think upon it. Excuse the paper: it is all I have.

N.B.—I lives at No. 27 Southampton Buildings, Holborn.

C. LAMB.

[1] We poets generally give *light* dinners.
[2] No doubt the poet here alludes to port wine at 38s. the dozen.

NOTE

["Green retreats." Pope twice uses the phrase "green retreats": in "Windsor Forest," line 1, and in his second Pastoral, "Summer," line 72:—

The mossy fountains, and the green retreats.

"Let Euclid rest . . ." From Milton's sonnet to Cyriack Skinner. The second passage is from his sonnet to Mr. Lawrence.]

LETTER 64

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Aug. 14, 1800.

READ on and you'll come to the *Pens*. My head is playing all the tunes in the world, ringing such peals. It has just finished the "Merry Christ Church Bells," and absolutely is beginning "Turn again, Whittington." Buz, buz, buz: bum, bum, bum: wheeze, wheeze, wheeze: feu, feu, feu: tinky, tinky, tinky: *craunch*. I shall certainly come to be damned at last. I have been getting drunk for two days running. I find my moral sense in the last stage of a consumption, and my religion burning as blue and faint as the tops of burning bricks. Hell gapes and the Devil's great guts cry cupboard for me. In the midst of this infernal torture, Conscience (and be damn'd to her), is barking and yelping as loud as any of them. I have sat down to read over again, and I think I do begin to spy out something with beauty and design in it. I perfectly accede to all your alterations, and only desire that you had cut deeper, when your hand was in.

In the next edition of the "Anthology" (which Phœbus avert and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out gentle-hearted, and substitute drunken: dog, ragged-head, seld-shaven, odd-eyed, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard for more delicacy. Damn you, I was beginning to forgive you and believe in earnest that the lugging in of my proper name was purely unintentional on your part, when looking back for further conviction, stares me in the face *Charles Lamb of the India House*. *Now* I am convinced it was all done in malice, heaped sack-upon-sack, congregated, studied malice. You Dog! your 141st page shall not save you. I own I was just ready

to acknowledge that there is a something not unlike good poetry in that page, if you had not run into the unintelligible abstraction-fit about the manner of the Deity's making spirits perceive his presence. God, nor created thing alive, can receive any honour from such thin show-box attributes. By-the-by, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the angel and the Duchess of Devonshire? If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it is a very modest one *for you*. Now I do affirm that "Lewti" is a very beautiful poem. I *was* in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions. *Therefore* it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification never got into an "Anthology" before. I am only sorry that the cause of all the passionate complaint is not greater than the trifling circumstance of Lewti being out of temper one day. In sober truth, I cannot see any great merit in the little Dialogue called "Blenheim." It is rather novel and pretty; but the thought is very obvious and children's poor prattle, a thing of easy imitation. *Pauper vult videri et* EST. "Gualberto" certainly has considerable originality, but sadly wants finishing. It is, as it is, one of the very best in the book. Next to "Lewti" I like the "Raven," which has a good deal of humour. I was pleased to see it again, for you once sent it me, and I have lost the letter which contained it. Now I am on the subject of Anthologies, I must say I am sorry the old Pastoral way has fallen into disrepute. The Gentry which now indite Sonnets are certainly the legitimate descendants of the ancient shepherds. The same simpering face of description, the old family face, is visibly continued in the line. Some of their ancestors' labours are yet to be found in Allan Ramsay's and Jacob Tonson's *Miscellanies*. But, miscellanies decaying and the old Pastoral way dying of mere want, their successors (driven from their paternal acres) now-a-days settle and hive upon Magazines and Anthologies. This Race of men are uncommonly addicted to superstition. Some of them are Idolators and worship the Moon. Others deify qualities, as love, friendship, sensibility, or bare accidents, as Solitude. Grief and Melancholy have their respective altars and temples among them, as the heathens builded theirs to Mors, Febris, Palloris. They all agree in ascribing a peculiar sanctity to the number fourteen. One of their own legislators affirmeth, that whatever exceeds that number "encroacheth upon the province of the Elegy"—*vice versa*, whatever "cometh short of that number abutteth upon the premises of the Epigram." I have been able to discover but few *Images* in their temples, which, like the Caves of Delphos of old, are famous for giving *Echoes*. They impute a religious importance to the

letter O, whether because by its roundness it is thought to typify the moon, their principal goddess, or for its analogies to their own labours, all ending where they began; or whatever other high and mystical reference, I have never been able to discover, but I observe they never begin their invocations to their gods without it, except indeed one insignificant sect among them, who use the Doric A, pronounced like Ah! broad, instead. These boast to have restored the old Dorian mood.

Now I am on the subject of poetry, I must announce to you, who, doubtless, in your remote part of the Island, have not heard tidings of so great a blessing, that GEORGE DYER hath prepared two ponderous volumes full of Poetry and Criticism. They impend over the town, and are threatened to fall in the winter. The first volume contains every sort of poetry except personal satire, which George, in his truly original prospectus, renounceth for ever, whimsically foisting the intention in between the price of his book and the proposed number of subscribers. (If I can, I will get you a copy of his *handbill*.) He has tried his *vein* in every species besides—the Spenserian, Thomsonian, Masonic and Akensidish more especially. The second volume is all criticism; wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply for ever, that the pastoral was introduced by Theocritus and polished by Virgil and Pope—that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius—that Cowley was ruined by excess of wit (a warning to all moderns)—that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poesy. O, George, George, with a head uniformly wrong and a heart uniformly right, that I had power and might equal to my wishes!—then I would call the Gentry of thy native Island, and they should come in troops, flocking at the sound of thy Prospectus Trumpet, and crowding who shall be first to stand in thy List of Subscribers. I can only put twelve shillings into thy pocket (which, I will answer for them, will not stick there long), out of a pocket almost as bare as thine. [*Lamb here erases six lines.*] Is it not a pity so much fine writing should be erased? But, to tell the truth, I began to scent that I was getting into that sort of style which Longinus and Dionysius Halicarnassus aptly call "the affected." But I am suffering from the combined effect of two days' drunkenness, and at such times it is not very easy to think or express in a natural series. The ONLY useful OBJECT of this Letter is to apprize you that on Saturday I shall transmit the PENS by the same coach I sent the Parcel. So enquire them out. You had better write to Godwin *here*, directing your letter to be forwarded to him. I

don't know his address. You know your letter must at any rate come to London first. C. L.

NOTE

["Your satire upon me"—"This Lime-tree Bower my Prison" (see pages 98 and 172).

"Those nine other wandering maids"—the Muses. A recollection of *The Anti-Jacobin's* verses on Lamb and his friends (see page 186).

"Your 141st page." "This Lime-tree Bower" again. By "unintelligible abstraction-fit" Lamb refers to the passage:—

> Ah! slowly sink
> Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
> Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
> Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
> Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
> And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
> Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
> Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
> On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
> Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
> As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet He makes
> Spirits perceive His presence.

"That scandalous piece of private history." A reference to Coleridge's "Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire," reprinted in the *Annual Anthology* from the *Morning Post*.

"Blenheim"—Southey's ballad, "It was a summer's evening."

"*Pauper vult videri et est.*" He wants to seem bald, and he *is*.

"Gualberto." The poem "St. Gualberto" by Southey, in the *Annual Anthology*.

"The Raven" was referred to in Lamb's letter on page 90.

George Dyer's *Poems*, in two volumes, were published in 1800. See note to Letter 80 on page 208. See also Appendix I., page 951.]

LETTER 65

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. August 24, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose I have been looking into Pliny's Letters, who is

noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth), but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things, have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow one, supposing, rationally enough I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Frend (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely *in rerum naturâ*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Frend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone, for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and . . .'s brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum. . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn,—his safest address—Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscriptum in the blank leaf, running thus, FROM THE AUTHOR! it might save his wits and restore the unhappy author to those studies of poetry and criticism, which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world. N.B.—Dirty books [? backs], smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise. N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable octavo; and a third

book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. (Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book.) So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it?—but let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

N.B. It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities. C. L.

NOTE

[Mr. Melmoth. A translation of the *Letters* of Pliny the Younger was made by William Melmoth in 1746.

Trismegistus—thrice greatest—was the term applied to Hermes, the Egyptian philosopher. Manning had written *An Introduction to Arithmetic and Algebra*, 1796, 1798.

William Frend (1757-1841), the mathematician and Unitarian, who had been prosecuted in the Vice-Chancellor's Court at Cambridge for a tract entitled "Peace and Union Recommended to the Associated Bodies of Republicans and Anti-Republicans," in which he attacked much of the Liturgy of the Church of England. He was found guilty and banished from the University of Cambridge. He had been a friend of Robert Robinson, whose life Dyer wrote, and remained a friend of Dyer to the end of his life. Coleridge had been among the undergraduates who supported Frend at his trial.

"*Meræ nugæ*"—Sheer nonsense.

". . .'s brain." In a later letter (see page 633) Lamb uses Judge Park's wig, when his head is in it, as a simile for emptiness.]

LETTER 66

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

August 26th, 1800.

HOW do you like this little epigram? It is not my writing, nor had I any finger in it. If you concur with me in thinking it very elegant and very original, I shall be tempted to name the author to you. I will just hint that it is almost or quite a first attempt.

HELEN REPENTANT TOO LATE

1

High-born Helen, round your dwelling
These twenty years I've paced in vain:
Haughty beauty, your lover's duty
Has been to glory in his pain.

2

High-born Helen! proudly telling
Stories of your cold disdain;
I starve, I die, now you comply,
And I no longer can complain.

3

These twenty years I've lived on tears,
Dwelling for ever on a frown;
On sighs I've fed, your scorn my bread;
I perish now you kind are grown.

4

Can I, who loved my Beloved
But for the "scorn was in her eye,"
Can I be moved for my Beloved,
When she "returns me sigh for sigh?"

5

In stately pride, by my bed-side,
High-born Helen's portrait's hung;
Deaf to my praise; my mournful lays
Are nightly to the portrait sung.

6

To that I weep, nor ever sleep,
Complaining all night long to her!
Helen, grown old, no longer cold,
Said, 'You to all men I prefer."

Godwin returned from Wicklow the week before last, tho' he did not reach home till the Sunday after. He might much better have spent that time with you.—But you see your invitation would have been too late. He greatly regrets the occasion he mist of visiting you, but he intends to revisit Ireland in the next summer, and then he will certainly take Keswick in his way. I dined with the Heathen on Sunday.

By-the-by, I have a sort of recollection that somebody, I think *you*, promised me a sight of Wordsworth's Tragedy. I should be very glad of it just now; for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone in Cold Bath Prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero & his crew had set off, with Caliban in a cage, to Milan, it would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving *me* a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices. I have just lit upon a most beautiful fiction of hell punishments, by the author of "Hurlothrumbo," a mad farce. The inventor imagines that in hell there is a great caldron of hot water, in which a man can scarce hold his finger, and an immense sieve over it, into which the probationary souls are put.

"And all the little souls
Pop through the riddle holes."

Mary's love to Mrs. Coleridge—mine to all.
N.B.—I pays no Postage.—

George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair.

George brought a Dr. Anderson to see me. The Doctor is a very pleasant old man, a great genius for agriculture, one that ties his breeches-knees with Packthread, & boasts of having had disappointments from ministers. The Doctor happened to mention an Epic Poem by one Wilkie, called the "Epigoniad," in which he assured us there is not one tolerable line from beginning to end, but all the characters, incidents, &c., are verbally copied from *Homer*. George, who had been sitting quite inattentive to the Doctor's criticism, no sooner heard the sound of *Homer* strike his pericraniks, than up he gets, and declares he must see that poem immediately: where was it to be had? An epic poem of 800 [? 8,000] lines, and *he* not hear of it! There must be some things good in it, and it was necessary he should see it, for he had touched pretty deeply upon that subject in his criticisms on the Epic. George has touched pretty deeply upon the Lyric, I find; he has also prepared a dissertation on the Drama and the comparison of the English and German theatres. As I rather doubted his competency to do the latter, knowing that his peculiar *turn* lies in the lyric species of composition, I questioned George what English plays he had read.

I found that he *had* read Shakspere (whom he calls an original, but irregular, genius), but it was a good while ago; and he has dipt into Rowe and Otway, I suppose having found their names in Johnson's Lives at full length; and upon this slender ground he has undertaken the task. He never seem'd even to have heard of Fletcher, Ford, Marlow, Massinger, and the Worthies of Dodsley's Collection; but he is to read all these, to prepare him for bringing out his "Parallel" in the winter. I find he is also determined to vindicate Poetry from the shackles which Aristotle & some others have imposed upon it, which is very good-natured of him, and very necessary just now! Now I am *touching* so *deeply* upon poetry, can I forget that I have just received from Cottle a magnificent copy of his Guinea Epic. Four-and-twenty Books to read in the dog-days! I got as far as the Mad Monk the first day, & fainted. Mr. Cottle's genius strongly points him to the *Pastoral*, but his inclinations divert him perpetually from his calling. He imitates Southey, as Rowe did Shakspeare, with his "Good morrow to ye; good master Lieut'." Instead of *a* man, *a* woman, *a* daughter, he constantly writes one a man, one a woman, one his daughter. Instead of *the* king, *the* hero, he constantly writes, he the king, he the hero—two flowers of rhetoric palpably from the "Joan." But Mr. Cottle soars a higher pitch: and when he *is* original, it is in a most original way indeed. His terrific scenes are indefatigable. Serpents, asps, spiders, ghosts, dead bodies, staircases made of nothing, with adders' tongues for bannisters—My God! what a brain he must have! He puts as many plums in his pudding as my Grandmother used to do; and then his emerging from Hell's horrors into Light, and treading on pure flats of this earth for twenty-three Books together!

C. L.

NOTE

[The little epigram was by Mary Lamb. It was printed first in the *John Woodvil* volume in 1802; and again, in a footnote to Lamb's essay "Blakesmoor in H——shire," 1824.

Godwin's return was from his visit to Curran. Coleridge had asked him to break his journey at Keswick.

"Wordsworth's Tragedy"—"The Borderers."

"Hurlothrumbo," an opera, was written by Samuel Johnson (1691-1773), a dancing master. It was produced at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket in 1729 and afterwards published.

"I would write a novel." Lamb returns to this idea in Letter 91 on page 232.

One of Dyer's printed criticisms of Shakespeare, in his *Poetics*, some years later might be quoted: "Shakespeare had the inward

clothing of a fine mind; the outward covering of solid reading, of critical observation, and the richest eloquence; and compared with these, what are the trappings of the schools?"

"Cottle's Guinea Epic." This would be *Alfred, an Epic Poem*, by Joseph Cottle, the publisher.]

LETTER 67

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. August 28, 1800.]

GEORGE DYER is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Copernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half-past five, in his neat library; the repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcase on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St. Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's—thou with thy Black Backs and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters—Shenstone, or the like? It would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed to my knowledge since it has been *his*—Oh the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded pia mater; thou shouldst restore light to his eyes, and him to his friends and the public; Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night—he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr. Anderson, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor wanted to see *me;* for, I being a Poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his "Agricultural Magazine." The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called "Epigoniad" by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive seemingly to what was going on—hatching of negative quantities—when, suddenly, the name of his old friend Homer stung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie's work. "It

was a curious fact that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it; and he *must* get a copy of it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic—and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 1400 lines!" I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure. Pray come on Monday if you *can*, and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights, and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the nonsense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision*. Take notice that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock, after which our pursuits will be our own. But indeed I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr. Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode.

NOTE

[Archimedes, the philosopher and mathematician of Syracuse; Archimagus, the title given to the High-Priest of the Persian Magi; Tycho Brahé, the Danish astronomer, born 1546, who discovered a new star in Cassiopeia; Copernicus, the German astronomer, born 1473, the founder of modern astronomy.

"Thy Black Back"—Manning's Algebra.

Dr. Anderson was James Anderson (1739-1808), the editor, at that time, of *Recreations in Agriculture, Natural History, Arts, and Miscellaneous History*, published in monthly parts. Lamb gave him a copy of verses—three extracts from *John Woodvil* which were printed in the number for November, 1800, as being "from an unpublished drama by C. Lamb." They were the "Description of a Forest Life," "The General Lover" ("What is it you love?") and "Fragment or Dialogue," better known as "The Dying Lover" (see page 131). All have slight variations from other versions. The most striking is the epithet "lubbar bands of sleep," instead of "lazy bands of sleep," in the "Description of a Forest Life."

Wilkie was William Wilkie (1721-1772), the "Scottish Homer," whose *Epigoniad* in nine books, based on the fourth book of the *Iliad*, was published in 1757.]

LETTER 68

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. Sept. 22, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which just now are dangling by our kitchen blaze) discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate. For, with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic for his body to-day, and being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose! For you must know we extract a divine spirit of gravy from those materials which, duly compounded with a consistence of bread and cream (y'clept bread-sauce), each to each giving double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful goldfoils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal, widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshly prudence (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases), yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr. Anderson, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth, where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bedroom windows (for air), causeth his neighbours to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstance; he rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's Æneid, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return postchaise (having dined with the Doctor), and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name, of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. "There is nothing *extant* of his works, Sir, but by all accounts he seems to have been a fine genius!" This fine genius, without anything to show for it or any title beyond George's courtesy, without even a name! and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry, now are the predominant sounds in George's pia mater, and their buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra—the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these bucks, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's

suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds (the rightful aborigines of his brain)—Gray, Akenside and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

God bless me, here are the birds, smoking hot!

All that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight!

Avaunt friendship and all memory of absent friends!

C. Lamb.

Note

["Divine spirit of gravy." This passage is the first of Lamb's outbursts of gustatory ecstasy, afterwards to become frequent in his writings.

John Barbour (1316-1395), author of *Bruce;* Gavin Douglas, (?1474-1522), author of two allegories, "The Palace of Honour" and "King Hart," and translator of the *Æneid;* and Henry the Minstrel, or Blind Harry (fl. 1470-1492), author of a poem on Wallace.

Here should come a letter, dated October 9, 1800, in the finest spirit of comedy describing to Coleridge an evening with George Dyer and the Cottles after the death of their brother Amos; and how Lamb, by praising Joseph Cottle's poem, drew away that good man's thoughts from his grief. "Joseph, who till now had sat with his knees cowering in by the fireplace, wheeled about, and with great difficulty of body shifted the same round to the corner of a table where I was sitting, and first stationing one thigh over the other, which is his sedentary mood, and placidly fixing his benevolent face right against mine, waited my observations. At that moment it came strongly into my mind, that I had got Uncle Toby before me, he looked so kind and so good." The letter, printed in full in other editions, is unfortunately not available for this.]

LETTER 69

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. Oct. 16, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation.

There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *feverites;* and, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise with the sincerity of Saint Peter, and the contrition of sinner Peter if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Cambridge. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not libraries, halls, colleges, books, pictures, statues? I wish to God you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius*,—a live rattlesnake, ten feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes, all mansions of *snakes*,—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds; and immediately a stranger enters (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open: the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his damn'd big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box, and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back, had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his damn'd mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head

was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of "The Farmer's Boy." I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. *All* is described.

Mind, I have only heard read one book.

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake, C. L.

NOTE

[*The Farmer's Boy*, by Robert Bloomfield, was published in March, 1800, and was immensely popular. Other criticisms upon it by Lamb will be found on pages 193 and 621.

Lamb's visit to Cambridge was deferred until January 5, 1801. See page 207.]

LETTER 70

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. Nov. 3, 1800.]

EQUID meditatur Archimedes? What is Euclid doing? What has happened to learned Trismegist?—Doth he take it in ill part, that his humble friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come—are impossibilities nothing—be they abstractions of the intellects or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum*, no thoroughfares? *racemi nimium alte pendentes?* Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in Æsop, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters, which constitute *your* name and Mr. *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis really curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat*. I wonder it has never been hit on before my time. I have made an acquisition latterly of a *pleasant hand*, one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by George Dyer, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another. George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian

law, or common property, in matter of society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui may* light you home. This Rickman lives in our Buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread-and-cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for somebody to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable anybody. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand: a fine rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes; himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and anything with anybody: a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine—reads no poetry but Shakspeare, very intimate with Southey, but never reads his poetry: relishes George Dyer, thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found, understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion: *up* to anything, *down* to everything—whatever *sapit hominem*. A perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me to a little trouble to *select*, only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one. A new class. An exotic, any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot. The clearest-headed fellow. Fullest of matter with least verbosity. If there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks.

At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play, which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found—no hint that anybody had to this day ever looked into it—with a courteous (reasonable!) request of another copy (if I had one by me,) and a promise of a definitive answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate a demand, so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch story, about half of the forest scene (which is too leisurely for story), and transposing that damn'd soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient, and cleared away a good deal besides; and sent this copy, written

all out (with alterations, &c., *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the tolling-bell and death-warrant.

This is all my Lunnon news. Send me some from the *banks of Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially George Dyer, who has no other name, nor idea, nor definition of Cambridge: namely, its being a market-town, sending members to Parliament, never entered into his definition: it was and is, simply, the banks of the Cam or the fair Cam, as Oxford is the banks of the Isis or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist,

C. LAMB.

(Read on; there's more at the bottom.)

You ask me about the "Farmer's Boy"—don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind? Don't you find he is always silly about *poor Giles*, and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that looks up to wealth? None of Burns's poet-dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him; but he makes me sick. Dyer knows the shoemaker (a damn'd stupid hound in company); but George promises to introduce him indiscriminately to all friends and all combinations.

NOTE

[The paragraph beginning "At last I have written," has certain corrections taken from the late Mr. Dykes Campbell's copy of it in *The Athenæum*, October 31, 1891.

"*Ecquid meditatur Archimedes?*"—"What does Manning 'intend'?" Possibly a half recollection of Milton's sonnet on Cyriack Skinner, referred to in Letter 63.

"*Impedimenta viarum.*" Lamb here drops into Burtonese.

"*Racemi nimium alte pendentes.*" Clusters hanging too high.

Mr. Crisp was Manning's landlord, a barber in St. Mary's Passage, Cambridge. In one letter at least Lamb spells his name Cripe—a joke he was fond of. In Congreve's "Way of the World," one of the servants says "crips" for "crisp".

"Rickman." This was John Rickman (1771-1840), already a friend of Southey's, whom he had met at Burton, near Christchurch, in Hampshire, where Rickman's father lived. Rickman, a graduate of Lincoln College, Oxford, was at this time secretary to Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester. He had conducted the *Commercial, Agricultural, and Manufacturer's Magazine*, and he was practically the originator of the census in England. We shall meet with him often in the correspondence.

"Wishing time." A variation upon Hamlet's "witching time of night" (III., 2, 406).

Kemble was John Philip Kemble, then manager of Drury Lane. The play was "John Woodvil." For an account of the version which Lamb submitted, see the Notes to *Poems and Plays*, Vol. V. of the present edition.

George Dyer wrote a *History of Cambridge University*.

George Daniel, the antiquary and bookseller, tells us that many years later he took Bloomfield to dine with Lamb at Islington.]

LETTER 71

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. Nov. 28, 1800.]

DEAR Manning,—I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia to go and spend a month with them at the Lakes. Now it fortunately happens (which is so seldom the case!) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend) that you will not take it unkind if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such an one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the Lakes. Consider Grasmere! Ambleside! Wordsworth! Coleridge! I hope you will.* Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the eternal devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning. Only confess, confess, a *bite*.

P.S. I think you named the 16th; but was it not modest of Lloyd to send such an invitation! It shows his knowledge of *money* and *time*. I would be loth to think he meant

> "Ironic satire sidelong sklented
> On my poor pursie."—BURNS.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward, I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation; if they can talk sensibly and feel properly; I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase), nor his five-shilling print over the mantelpiece of old Nabbs the carrier (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world—eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops

sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers (you may know them by their gait), lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silver-smiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchman at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of Fire and Stop thief; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London with-the-many-sins. O City abounding in whores, for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang!

C. L.

NOTE

[Charles Lloyd had just settled at Old Brathay, about three miles from Ambleside.

Manning's reply to this letter indicates that Lamb's story of the invitation to stay with Lloyd was a hoax. The first page ended where I have put the asterisk—as in Letter 59, to Gutch. Manning writes: "*N.B.* Your Lake story completely took me in till I got to the 2d page. I was pleased to think you were so rich, but I confess rather wondered how you should be able conveniently to take so long a journey this inside-fare time of the year."

Manning also says: "I condole with you, Mr. Lamb, on the tragic fate of your tragedie—I wonder what fool it was that read it! By the bye, you would do me a very very great favour by letting me have a copy. If Beggars might be chusers, I should ask to have it transcribed partly by you and partly by your sister. I have a desire to possess some of Mary's handwriting" (see Letter 79 from Lamb to Manning, on page 205).

"Burns." The lines are in the poem "To W. Simpson, Ochiltree," verse 2:—

> Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
> On my poor Musie.

"Beautiful Quakers of Pentonville." This is almost certainly a reference to Hester Savory, the original of Lamb's poem "Hester" (see page 261). The whole passage is the first of three eulogies of London in the letters (see pages 210 and 212), all very similar. See also page 235 for "The Londoner," which Lamb wrote for the *Morning Post* and which was printed there on February 1, 1802.

"You may know them by their gait" (see "Julius Cæsar," I., 3, 132).]

LETTERS 72 AND 73

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[Dec. 4, 1800.]

DEAR Sir,—I send this speedily after the heels of Cooper (O! the dainty expression) to say that Mary is obliged to stay at home on Sunday to receive a female friend, from whom I am equally glad to escape. So that we shall be by ourselves. I write, because it may make *some* difference in your marketting, &c.

C. L.

Thursday Morning.

I am sorry to put you to the expense of twopence postage. But I calculate thus: if Mary comes she will

eat Beef 2 plates,	4d.	
Batter Pudding 1 do.	2d.	
Beer, a pint,	2d.	
Wine, 3 glasses,	11d.	I drink no wine!
Chesnuts, after dinner,	2d.	
Tea and supper at moderate calculation,	9d.	
	2s. 6d.	
From which deduct	2d.	postage.
	2s. 4d.	

You are a clear gainer by her not coming.

NOTE

[If the date be correct this becomes the first extant letter proper which Lamb sent to the author of *Political Justice*. Godwin was then forty-four years old, and had long been busy upon his tragedy "Antonio," in which Lamb had been assisting with suggestions. In this connection I place here the following document, which belongs, however, naturally to an earlier date, but is not harmed by its present position:—

MINUTE SENT BY C. LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date. Autumn, 1800.]

Queries. Whether the best conclusion would not be a solemn judicial pleading, appointed by the king, before himself in

person of Antonio as proxy for Roderigo, and Guzman for himself—the forms and ordering of it to be highly solemn and grand. For this purpose, (allowing it,) the king must be reserved, and not have committed his royal dignity by descending to previous conference with Antonio, but must refer from the beginning to this settlement. He must sit in dignity as a high royal arbiter. Whether this would admit of spiritual interpositions, cardinals, &c.—appeals to the Pope, and haughty rejection of his interposition by Antonio—(this merely by the way).

The pleadings must be conducted by short speeches—replies, taunts, and bitter recriminations by Antonio, in his rough style. In the midst of the undecided cause, may not a messenger break up the proceedings by an account of Roderigo's death (no improbable or far-fetch'd event), and the whole conclude with an affecting and awful invocation of Antonio upon Roderigo's spirit, now no longer dependent upon earthly tribunals or a froward woman's will, &c., &c.

Almanza's daughter is now free, &c.

This might be made *very affecting*. Better nothing follow after; if anything, she must step forward and resolve to take the veil. In this case, the whole story of the former nunnery *must* be omitted. But, I think, better leave the final conclusion to the imagination of the spectator. Probably the violence of confining her in a convent is not necessary; Antonio's own castle would be sufficient.

To relieve the former part of the Play, could not some sensible images, some work for the Eye, be introduced? A gallery of Pictures, Almanza's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote, &c.

At all events, with the present want of action, the Play must not extend above four Acts, unless it is quite new modell'd. The proposed alterations might all be effected in a few weeks.

Solemn judicial pleadings always go off well, as in Henry the 8th, Merchant of Venice, and perhaps Othello.

NOTE

Lamb, said Mr. Paul, writing of this critical Minute, was so genuinely kind and even affectionate in his criticism that Godwin did not perceive his real disapproval.

Mr. Swinburne, writing in *The Athenæum* for May 13, 1876, made an interesting comment upon one of Lamb's suggestions in the foregoing document. It contains, he remarks, "a singular anticipation of one of the most famous passages in the work of the greatest master of our own age, the scene of the portraits in

'Hernani:' 'To relieve the former part of the play, could not some sensible images, some work for the eye, be introduced? *A gallery of pictures, Alexander's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote,* &c.' I know of no coincidence more pleasantly and strangely notable than this between the gentle genius of the loveliest among English essayists and the tragic invention of the loftiest among French poets."

After long negotiation "Antonio" was now actually in rehearsal at Drury Lane, to be produced on December 13. Lamb supplied the epilogue.

Cooper was Godwin's servant.]

LETTER 74

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Dec. 10th, 1800.
Wednesday Morning.

DEAR Sir,—I expected a good deal of pleasure from your company to-morrow, but I am sorry I must beg of you to excuse me. I have been confined ever since I saw you with one of the severest colds I ever experienced, occasioned by being in the night air on Sunday, and on the following day, very foolishly. I am neither in health nor spirits to meet company. I hope and trust I shall get out on Saturday night. You will add to your many favours, by transmitting to me as early as possible as many tickets as conveniently you can spare,—Yours truly, C. L.

I have been plotting how to abridge the Epilogue. But I cannot see that any lines can be spared, retaining the connection, except these two, which are better out.

"Why should I instance, &c.,
The sick man's purpose, &c.,"

and then the following line must run thus,

"The truth by an example best is shown."

Excuse this *important* postscript.

LETTER 75

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. Dec. 13, 1800.]

DON'T spill the cream upon this letter. I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out: I'll come *when I can*. You shall have an amended copy of my play early next week. Mary thanks you; but her handwriting is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man's you wot of; but for God's sake (who would not like to have so pious a *professor's* work *damn'd*) do not mention it—it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin's. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the mass and bulk of the epilogue. The *name* is *Jack* INCIDENT. It is about promise-breaking—you will see it all, if you read the *papers*.

"Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,
Purchased a renter's share at Drury-lane;
A prudent man in every other matter,
Known at his club-room for an honest hatter;
Humane and courteous, led a civil life,
And has been seldom known to beat his wife;
But Jack is now grown quite another man,
Frequents the green-room, knows the plot and plan
Of each new piece,
And has been seen to talk with Sheridan!
In at the play-house just at six he pops,
And never quits it till the curtain drops,
Is never absent on the *author's night*,
Knows actresses and actors too——by sight;
So humble, that with Suett he'll confer,
Or take a pipe with plain Jack Bannister;
Nay, with an author has been known so free,
He once suggested a catastrophe—
In short, John dabbled till his head was turn'd;
His wife remonstrated, his neighbours mourn'd,
His customers were dropping off apace,
And Jack's affairs began to wear a piteous face.
One night his wife began a curtain lecture;
"My dearest Johnny, husband, spouse, protector,
Take pity on your helpless babes and me,
Save us from ruin, you from bankruptcy—
Look to your business, leave these cursed plays,
And try again your old industrious ways."
Jack who was always scared at the Gazette,
And had some bits of scull uninjured yet,
Promised amendment, vow'd his wife spake reason,
"He would not see another play that season—"

Three stubborn fortnights Jack his promise kept,
Was late and early in his shop, eat, slept,
And walk'd and talk'd, like ordinary men;
No *wit*, but John the hatter once again—
Visits his club: when lo! one *fatal night*
His wife with horror view'd the well-known sight—
John's *hat*, *wig*, *snuff-box*—well she knew his tricks—
And Jack decamping at the hour of six,
Just at the counter's edge a playbill lay,
Announcing that "Pizarro" was the play—
"O Johnny, Johnny, this is your old doing."
Quoth Jack, "Why what the devil storm's a-brewing?
About a harmless play why all this fright?
I'll go and see it if it's but for spite—
Zounds, woman! Nelson's[1] to be there to-night."

N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*,—except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen or *heard*. Now, I remember I have promised the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it ('pon honour!) by this day week.

I must go and dress for the boxes! First night! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you have read the last first; it begins thus:—the names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play.

"Ladies, ye've seen how Guzman's consort died,
Poor victim of a Spaniard brother's pride,
When Spanish honour through the world was blown,
And Spanish beauty for the best was known.[2]
In that romantic, unenlighten'd time,
A *breach of promise*[3] was a sort of crime—
Which of you handsome English ladies here,
But deems the penance bloody and severe?
A whimsical old Saragossa[4] fashion,
That a dead father's dying inclination,
Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion,[5]
Unjustly on the sex *we*[6] men exclaim,
Rail at *your*[7] vices,—and commit the same;—
Man is a promise-breaker from the womb,
And goes a promise-breaker to the tomb—
What need we instance here the lover's vow,
The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow?[8]
The truth by few examples best is shown—
Instead of many which are better known,
Take poor Jack Incident, that's dead and gone.
Jack," &c. &c. &c.

Now you have it all—how do you like it? I am going to hear it recited!!! C. L.

[1] A good clap-trap. Nelson has exhibited two or three times at both theatres—and advertised himself.
[2] Four *easy* lines.
[3] For which the *heroine died*.
[4] In *Spain!!*
[5] Two *neat* lines.
[6] Or *you*.
[7] Or *our*, as *they* have altered it.
[8] Antithesis

NOTE

["As one Tobin's." The rehearsals of "Antonio" were attended by Godwin's friend, John Tobin, subsequently author of "The Honeymoon," in the hope, on account of Godwin's reputation for heterodoxy, of deceiving people as to the real authorship of the play. It was, however, avowed by Godwin on the title-page.

Jack Bannister, the comedian, was a favourite actor of Lamb's. See the *Elia* essay "On some of the Old Actors."

Miss Heard was a daughter of William Heard, the author of "The Snuff-Box," a feeble comedy. Miss Tidswell, by the irony of fate, had a part in Lamb's own play, "Mr. H.," six years later.

"I have not read the play." Meaning probably, "I have not read it in its final form." Lamb must have read it in earlier versions. I quote Mr. Kegan Paul's summary of the plot of "Antonio":—

Helena was betrothed, with her father's consent, to her brother Antonio's friend, Roderigo. While Antonio and Roderigo were at the wars, Helena fell in love with, and married, Don Gusman. She was the king's ward, who set aside the pre-contract. Antonio, returning, leaves his friend behind; he has had great sorrows, but all will be well when he comes to claim his bride. When Antonio finds his sister is married, the rage he exhibits is ferocious. He carries his sister off from her husband's house, and demands that the king shall annul the marriage with Gusman. There is then talk of Helena's entrance into a convent. At last the king, losing patience, gives judgment, as he had done before, that the pre-contract with Roderigo was invalid, and the marriage to Gusman valid. Whereupon Antonio bursts through the guards, and kills his sister.]

LETTER 76

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Dec. 14, 1800.
Late o' Sunday.

DEAR Sir,—I have performed my office in a slovenly way, but judge for me. I sat down at 6 o'clock, and never left reading (and I read out to Mary) your play till 10. In this sitting I noted down lines as they occurred, exactly as you will read my rough paper. Do not be frightened at the bulk of my remarks, for they are almost all upon single lines, which, put together, do not amount to a hundred, and many of them merely verbal. I had but one object in view, abridgement for compression sake. I have used a dogmatical language (which is truly ludicrous when the trivial nature of my remarks is considered), and, remember, my office was to hunt out faults. You may fairly abridge one half of them, as a fair deduction for the infirmities of Error, and a single reading, which

leaves only fifty objections, most of them merely against words, on no short play. Remember, you constituted me Executioner, and a hangman has been seldom seen to be ashamed of his profession before Master Sheriff. We'll talk of the Beauties (of which I am more than ever sure) when we meet,—Yours truly, C. L.

I will barely add, as you are on the very point of printing, that in my opinion neither prologue nor epilogue should accompany the play. It can only serve to remind your readers of its fate. *Both* suppose an audience, and, that jest being gone, must convert into burlesque. Nor would I (but therein custom and decorum must be a law) print the actors' names. Some things must be kept out of sight.

I have done, and I have but a few square inches of paper to fill up. I am emboldened by a little jorum of punch (vastly good) to say that next to *one man*, I am the most hurt at our ill success. The breast of Hecuba, where she did suckle Hector, looked not to be more lovely than Marshal's forehead when it spit forth sweat, at Critic-swords contending. I remember two honest lines by Marvel, (whose poems by the way I am just going to possess)

> "Where every Mower's wholesome heat
> Smells like an Alexander's sweat."

NOTE

["Antonio" was performed on December 13, with John Philip Kemble in the title-rôle, and was a complete failure. Lamb wrote an account of the unlucky evening many years later in the "Old Actors" series in the *London Magazine* (see *Elia*, Vol. II. of the present edition, page 292). He speaks there, as here, of Marshal's forehead—Marshal being John Marshall, a friend of the Godwins. The lines from Andrew Marvell are from the poem "Upon Appleton House." For the reference to Hecuba see "Coriolanus," I., 3, 43-46.

After the play Godwin supped with Lamb, when it was decided to publish "Antonio" at once. Lamb retained the MS. for criticism. The present letter in the original contains his comments, the only one of which that Mr. Kegan Paul thought worth reproducing being the following:—

"'Enviable' is a very bad word. I allude to 'Enviable right to bless us.' For instance, Burns, comparing the ills of manhood with the state of infancy, says, 'Oh! enviable early days;' here 'tis good, because the passion lay in comparison. Excuse my insulting your judgment with an illustration. I believe I only wanted to beg in the name of a favourite Bardie, or at most to confirm my own judgment."

Lamb, it will be remembered (see page 172), had refused to let Coleridge use "enviable" in "Lewti." Burns's poem to which Lamb alludes is "Despondency, an Ode," Stanza 5, "Oh! enviable, early days."

Godwin's play was published in 1801 without Lamb's epilogue.]

LETTER 77

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 16th, 1800.

WE are damn'd!

Not the facetious epilogue could save us. For, as the editor of the "Morning Post," quick-sighted gentleman! hath this morning truly observed, (I beg pardon if I falsify his *words*, their profound *sense* I am sure I retain,) both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mister Manning) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. PROFESSOR, thy glories wax dim! Again, the incomparable author of the "True Briton" declareth in *his* paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O PROFESSOR, how different thy feelings now (*quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophiæ tantas victorias aquisivisti*),—how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago,—thy anticipation of thy nine nights,—those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night! Calling in accidentally on the Professor while he was out, I was ushered into the study; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which indicated thy violent and satanical pride of heart. Imprimis, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges; I was in the honoured file! Next, a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride, lay a list of all the morning papers (from the "Morning Chronicle" downwards to the "Porcupine,") with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play—stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with; and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next, which convinced me to a dead conviction of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride—lay a list of books, which

thy un-tragedy-favoured pocket could never answer; Dodsley's Old Plays, Malone's Shakspeare (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to Christians and superstitious minds); nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory), that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned;* and thou, Professor, must read Shakspere in future out of a common edition; and, hark ye, pray read him to a little better purpose! Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall), lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee, that thy assistant might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue! Manning, all these things came over my mind; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits (the Professor is £500 ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides £200 he would have got for the copyright, and the Professor is never much beforehand with the world; what he gets is all by the sweat of his brow and dint of brain, for the Professor, though a sure man, is also a slow); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids), and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of £200 from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full £50. The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel: his face was lengthened, and ALL OVER SWEAT; I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. "From every pore of him a perfume fell." I have seen that man in many situations, and from my soul I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper; and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*. L.

NOTE

[The Professor was Lamb's name for Godwin.

"*Quantum mutatus ab illo . . .*"—"How changed from that Professor who in the fields of philosophy had achieved so many victories." An adaptation of Virgil, *Æneid*, II., 274, etc.

The *Porcupine* was Cobbett's paper.

"From every pore of him a perfume fell." From Lee's "Rival Queens," I., 3, 44.]

LETTERS 78 AND 79

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[Middle December.]

I SEND you all of Coleridge's letters to me, which I have preserved: some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on "Pride's Cure," by a young physician from EDINBRO', who modestly suggests quite another kind of a plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it. I also send you the Professor's letter to me (careful Professor! to conceal his *name* even from his correspondent), ere yet the Professor's pride was cured. Oh monstrous and almost satanical pride!

You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor's, *which burn*) *in statu quo*, till I come to claim mine own.

C. LAMB.

For Mister Manning, Teacher of Mathematics and the Black Arts. There is another letter in the inside cover of the book opposite the blank leaf that *was*.

Mind this goes for a letter. (Acknowledge it *directly*, if only in ten words.)

DEAR MANNING—(I shall want to hear this comes safe.) I have scratched out a good deal, as you will see. Generally, what I have rejected was either *false* in *feeling*, or a violation of character—mostly of the first sort. I will here just instance in the concluding few lines of the "Dying Lover's Story," which completely contradicted his character of *silent* and *unreproachful*. I hesitated a good deal what copy to send you, and at last resolved to send the worst, because you are familiar with it, and can make it out; and a stranger would find so much difficulty in doing it, that it would give him more pain than pleasure.

This is compounded precisely of the two persons' hands you requested it should be.—Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[These were the letters accompanying the copy of "Pride's Cure" (or "John Woodvil") which Charles and Mary Lamb together made for Manning, as requested in the note on page 195.

All the letters mentioned by Lamb have vanished; unless by an unlikely chance the bundle contained Coleridge's letters on Mrs. Lamb's death and on the quarrel with Lamb and Lloyd (see pages 42 and 120). Lamb, in later life, seldom kept letters; fortunately he preserved several of Manning's.

The last lines of "The Dying Lover" will be found quoted on page 131.

Manning's reply, dated December, 1800, gives a little information concerning the Edinburgh physician's letter—"that gentleman whose fertile brain can, at a moment's warning, furnish you with 10 Thousand models of a plot—'The greatest variety of Rapes, Murders, Deathsheads, &c., &c., sold here.'" Manning thinks that the Scotch doctor understands Lamb's tragedy better than Coleridge does. He adds: "*P.S.*—My verdict upon the Poet's epitaph is 'genuine.'" This probably applies to a question asked by Lamb concerning Wordsworth's poem of that name.]

LETTER 80

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

December 27th, 1800.

AT length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window or wainscot, expressly formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and catched up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Blom-

field's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately—the most unlucky accident—he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30—the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian—and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence;—"Sir, it's of great consequence that the *world* is not *misled!*"

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian* Travels for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residence against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that He must write poetry? *Is morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fenelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee, Deo volente et diabolo nolente, on Monday night the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress. Embark at six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St. Mary's light-house, muffins and coffee upon table (or any other curious production of Turkey or both Indies), snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with *argument;* difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve.—N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the unctuous and palate-soothing flesh of geese wild and tame, nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking-pig,

or any other Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of you and the cook of Gonville. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Lamb's copy of George Dyer's *Poems* is in the British Museum. It has the original withdrawn 1800 title-page and the cancelled preface bound up with it, and Lamb has written against the reference to the sacrifice, in the new 1801 preface: "One copy of this cancelled preface, snatch'd out of the fire, is prefaced to this volume." See Letter 91, page 230. It runs to sixty-five pages, whereas the new one is but a few words. Southey tells Grosvener Bedford in one of his letters that Lamb gave Dyer the title of Cancellarius Magnus. Dyer reprinted in the 1802 edition of his *Poems* the greater part of the cancelled preface and all of the first page—so that it is difficult to say what the fallacy was. The original edition of his *Poems* was to be in three large volumes. In 1802 it had come down to two small ones.

Godwin's Persian drama was "Abbas, King of Persia," but he could not get it acted. The reference to Fénélon is to Godwin's *Political Justice* (first edition, Vol. I., page 84) where he argues on the comparative worth of the persons of Fénélon, a chambermaid, and Godwin's mother, supposing them to have been present at the famous fire at Cambrai and only one of them to be saved. (As a matter of fact Fénélon was not at the fire.)

We must suppose that Lamb carried out his intention of visiting Manning on January 5; but there is no confirmation.]

LETTER 81

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. January 30, 1801.]

THANKS for your Letter and Present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most please me are, the Song of Lucy. . . . *Simon's sickly daughter* in the Sexton made me *cry*. Next to these are the description of the continuous Echoes in the story of Joanna's laugh, where the mountains and all the scenery absolutely seem alive—and that fine Shakesperian character of the Happy Man, in the Brothers,

> ———that creeps about the fields,
> Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
> Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
> Into his face, *until the Setting Sun*
> *Writes Fool upon his forehead.*

I will mention one more: the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the Cumberland Beggar, that he may have about him the melody of Birds, altho' he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feelings for the Beggar's, and, in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish.—The Poet's Epitaph is disfigured, to my taste by the vulgar satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of pin point in the 6th stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the Beggar, that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader, while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, I will teach you how to think upon this subject. This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne and many many novelists & modern poets, who continually put a sign post up to shew where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid. Very different from Robinson Crusoe, the Vicar of Wakefield, Roderick Random, and other beautiful bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between Author and reader; I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it. Modern novels "St. Leons" and the like are full of such flowers as these "Let not my reader suppose," "Imagine, *if you can*"—modest!—&c.—I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that you may not think I have passed over your book without observation. —I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his Ancient Marinere "a poet's Reverie"—it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a Lion but only the scenical representation of a Lion. What new idea is gained by this Title, but one subversive of all credit, which the tale should force upon us, of its truth? For me, I was never so affected with any human Tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed with it for many days—I dislike all the miraculous part of it, but the feelings of the man under the operation of such scenery dragged me along like Tom Piper's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the Marinere should have had a character and profession. This is a Beauty in Gulliver's Travels, where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the Ancient Marinere undergoes such Trials, as overwhelm and bury all individuality or memory of what he was, like the state of a man in a Bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is: that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is I think as well a little unfounded: the Marinere from being conversant in supernatural events *has* acquired a supernatural and strange cast of *phrase*,

eye, appearance, &c. which frighten the wedding guest. You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary, with a prose apology, to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see. To sum up a general opinion of the second vol.—I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as the Ancient Marinere, the Mad Mother, and the Lines at Tintern Abbey in the first.—I could; too, have wished the Critical preface had appeared in a separate treatise. All its dogmas are true and just, and most of them new, *as* criticism. But they associate a *diminishing* idea with the Poems which follow, as having been written for *Experiment* on the public taste, more than having sprung (as they must have done) from living and daily circumstances.—I am prolix, because I am gratifyed in the opportunity of writing to you, and I don't well know when to leave off. I ought before this to have reply'd to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your Sister I could gang any where. But I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a Journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles,—life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud, the Sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, the old book stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade,—all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impells me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much Life.—All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?——

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry & books) to groves and vallies. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book case which has followed me about (like a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge) wherever I have moved—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself,

my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know, that the Mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun & moon and skys and hills & lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof, beautifully painted but unable to satisfy the mind, and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the Beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh & green and warm are all the inventions of men and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love, *and my sister's*, to D. & your*self* and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.

C. LAMB.

Thank you for Liking my Play!!

NOTE

[This is the first—and perhaps the finest—letter from Lamb to Wordsworth that has been preserved. Wordsworth, then living with his sister Dorothy at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, was nearly thirty-one years of age; Lamb was nearly twenty-six. The work criticised is the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. The second and sixth stanzas of the "Poet's Epitaph" ran thus:—

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh;
Go, carry to some other place
The hardness of thy coward eye,
The falshood of thy sallow face.

. . . . . .

Wrapp'd closely in thy sensual fleece
O turn aside, and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy pin-point of a soul away!

St. Leon was by Godwin.

Of "The Ancient Mariner, a Poet's Reverie," Wordsworth had said in a note to the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*:—

The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being who having been long under the controul of supernatural impressions might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural; secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon; thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated.

"The Mad Mother." The poem beginning, "Her eyes are wild, her head is bare."

"I could, too, have wished." The passage from these words to "don't well know when to leave off," is now printed for the first time. When Wordsworth sent the correspondence to Moxon, for Talfourd's use, in 1835, he wrote:—

> There are, however, in them some parts which had better be kept back. . . . I have also thought it proper to suppress every word of criticism [Wordsworth meant adverse criticism] upon my own poems. . . . Those relating to my works are withheld, partly because I shrink from the thought of assisting in any way to spread my own praises, and still more I being convinced that the opinions or judgments of friends given in this way are of little value.

"I have passed all my days in London." See note on page 195.

"Joanna." Joanna of the laugh. See note on page 831.

"Barbara Lewthwaite." See Wordsworth's "Pet Lamb."

"Thank you for Liking my Play!!" We must suppose this postscript to contain a touch of sarcasm. Lamb had sent "John Woodvil" to Grasmere and Keswick. Wordsworth apparently had been but politely interested in it. Coleridge had written to Godwin: "Talking of tragedies, at every perusal my love and admiration of his [Lamb's] play rises a peg."

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, dated at end February 7, 1801, not available for this edition. It is one of the best letters written by Lamb to Robert Lloyd, or to any one. Lamb first praises Izaak Walton, whose *Compleat Angler* he loves for two reasons: for itself and for its connection with his own Hertfordshire county, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Amwell and the Ware neighbourhood. The letter passes to a third eulogy of London (see note on page 195). Lamb closes by remarking that Manning is "a dainty chiel and a man of great power, almost an enchanter."]

LETTER 82

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

Feb. 15, 1801.

I HAD need be cautious henceforward what opinion I give of the "Lyrical Ballads." All the North of England are in a turmoil. Cumberland and Westmoreland have already declared a state of war. I lately received from Wordsworth a copy of the second volume, accompanied by an acknowledgement of having received from me many months since a copy of a certain Tragedy, with excuses for not having made any acknowledgement sooner, it being owing to an "almost insurmountable aversion from Letter-

writing." This letter I answered in due form and time, and enumerated several of the passages which had most affected me, adding, unfortunately, that no single piece had moved me so forcibly as the "Ancient Mariner," "The Mad Mother," or the "Lines at Tintern Abbey." The Post did not sleep a moment. I received almost instantaneously a long letter of four sweating pages from my Reluctant Letter-Writer, the purport of which was, that he was sorry his 2d vol. had not given me more pleasure (Devil a hint did I give that it had *not pleased me*), and "was compelled to wish that my range of sensibility was more extended, being obliged to believe that I should receive large influxes of happiness and happy Thoughts" (I suppose from the L. B.)—With a deal of stuff about a certain Union of Tenderness and Imagination, which in the sense he used Imagination was not the characteristic of Shakspeare, but which Milton possessed in a degree far exceeding other Poets: which Union, as the highest species of Poetry, and chiefly deserving that name, "He was most proud to aspire to;" then illustrating the said Union by two quotations from his own 2d vol. (which I had been so unfortunate as to miss). 1st Specimen—a father addresses his son:—

> "When thou
> First camest into the World, as it befalls
> To new-born Infants, thou didst sleep away
> Two days: and *Blessings from thy father's Tongue*
> *Then fell upon thee.*"

The lines were thus undermarked, and then followed "This Passage, as combining in an extraordinary degree that Union of Imagination and Tenderness which I am speaking of, I consider as one of the Best I ever wrote!"

2d Specimen.—A youth, after years of absence, revisits his native place, and thinks (as most people do) that there has been strange alteration in his absence:—

> "And that the rocks
> And everlasting Hills themselves were changed."

You see both these are good Poetry: but after one has been reading Shakspeare twenty of the best years of one's life, to have a fellow start up, and prate about some unknown quality, which Shakspeare possessed in a degree inferior to Milton and *somebody else!!* This was not to be *all* my castigation. Coleridge, who had not written to me some months before, starts up from his bed of sickness to reprove me for my hardy presumption: four long pages, equally sweaty and more tedious, came from him; assuring me that, when the works of a man of true genius such as W. undoubtedly was, do not please me at first sight, I should suspect the

fault to lie "in me and not in them," etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. What am I to do with such people? I certainly shall write them a very merry Letter. Writing to *you*, I may say that the 2d vol. has no such pieces as the three I enumerated. It is full of original thinking and an observing mind, but it does not often make you laugh or cry.—It too artfully aims at simplicity of expression. And you sometimes doubt if Simplicity be not a cover for Poverty. The best Piece in it I will send you, being *short*. I have grievously offended my friends in the North by declaring my undue preference; but I need not fear you:—

"She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the Springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were few (*sic*) to praise
And very few to love.

"A violet, by a mossy stone,
Half hidden from the eye.
Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky.

"She lived unknown; and few could know,
When Lucy ceased to be.
But she is in the grave, and oh!
The difference to me."

This is choice and genuine, and so are many, many more. But one does not like to have 'em rammed down one's throat. "Pray, take it—it's very good—let me help you—eat faster."

NOTE

[It cannot be too much regretted that Lamb's "very merry Letter" in answer to Wordsworth and Coleridge's remonstrances has not been preserved.

At the end of the letter occurred this passage quoted by Mr. Dykes Campbell in an article in *The Athenæum*:—

"Now to my own affairs. I have not taken that thing to Colman, but I have proceeded one step in the business. I have inquired his address and am promised it in a few days."

That thing would, I think, be a play by some one else, perhaps Holcroft, to be offered to George Colman, manager of the Haymarket: hence the emphasis laid upon "*my* play."]

LETTER 83

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[Late February, 1801.]

YOU masters of logic ought to know (logic is nothing more than a knowledge of *words*, as the Greek etymon implies), that all words are no more to be taken in a literal sense at all times than a promise given to a tailor. When I expressed an apprehension that you were mortally offended, I meant no more than by the application of a certain formula of efficacious sounds, which had *done* in similar cases before, to rouse a sense of decency in you, and a remembrance of what was due to me! You masters of logic should advert to this phenomenon in human speech, before you arraign the usage of us dramatic geniuses. Imagination is a good blood mare, and goes well; but the misfortune is, she has too many paths before her. 'Tis true I might have imaged to myself, that you had trundled your frail carcass to Norfolk. I might also, and did imagine, that you had not, but that you were lazy, or inventing new properties in a triangle, and for that purpose moulding and squeezing Landlord Crisp's three-cornered beaver into fantastic experimental forms; or that Archimedes was meditating to repulse the French, in case of a Cambridge invasion, by a geometric hurling of folios on their red caps; or, peradventure, that you were in extremities, in great wants, and just set out for Trinity-bogs when my letters came. In short, my genius (which is a short word now-a-days for what-a-great-man-am-I) was absolutely stifled and overlaid with its own riches. Truth is one and poor, like the cruse of Elijah's widow. Imagination is the bold face that multiplies its oil: and thou, the old cracked pipkin, that could not believe it could be put to such purposes. Dull pipkin, to have Elijah for thy cook! Imbecile recipient of so fat a miracle! I send you George Dyer's Poems, the richest production of the lyric muse *this century* can justly boast: for Wordsworth's L. B. were published, or at least written, before Christmas.

Please to advert to pages 291 to 296 for the most astonishing account of where Shakspeare's muse has been all this while. I thought she had been dead, and buried in Stratford Church, with the young man *that kept her company*,—

> "But it seems, like the Devil,
> Buried in Cole Harbour.
> Some say she's risen again,
> 'Gone prentice to a Barber."

N.B.—I don't charge anything for the additional manuscript notes, which are the joint productions of myself and a learned translator of Schiller, John Stoddart, Esq.

N.B. the 2nd.—I should not have blotted your book, but I had sent my own out to be bound, as I was in duty bound. A liberal criticism upon the several pieces, lyrical, heroical, amatory, and satirical, would be acceptable. So, you don't think there's a Word's—worth of good poetry in the great L. B.! I daren't put the dreaded syllables at their just length, for my back tingles from the northern castigation. I send you the three letters, which I beg you to return along with those former letters, which I hope you are not going to print by your detention. But don't be in a hurry to send them. When you come to town will do. Apropos of coming to town, last Sunday was a fortnight, as I was coming to town from the Professor's, inspired with new rum, I tumbled down, and broke my nose. I drink nothing stronger than malt liquors.

I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady's next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tip-toe) over the Thames and Surrey Hills, at the upper end of King's Bench walks in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold free converse with my immortal mind; for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em), since I have resided in town. Like the country mouse, that had tasted a little of urban manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear self without mouse-traps and time-traps. By my new plan, I shall be as airy, up four pair of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of [that] enchanting, more than Mahometan paradise, London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toyshops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastry-cooks! St. Paul's Churchyard! the Strand! Exeter Change! Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! Ain't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam! Had not you better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal,—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.

'Tis half-past twelve o'clock, and all sober people ought to be a-bed. Between you and me, the "Lyrical Ballads" are but drowsy performances.

C. LAMB (as you may guess).

NOTE

[Lamb refers in his opening sentences to a letter from himself to Manning which no longer exists. In Manning's last letter, dated February 24, he complains that he found on returning to Cambridge three copies of a letter from Lamb suggesting that he was offended because he had not answered.

The passage in George Dyer's *Poems* between pages 291 and 296 is long, but it is so quaint and so illustrative of its author's mind that I give it in full, footnotes and all, in the Appendix (see page 951).

Stoddart we have already met. He had translated, with Georg Heinrich Noehden, Schiller's *Fiesco*, 1796, and *Don Carlos*, 1798. The copy of Dyer's *Poems* annotated by Lamb and Stoddart I have not seen.

"So, you don't think there's a Word's—worth . . ." Manning had written, on February 24, 1801, of the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*: "I think 'tis utterly absurd from one end to the other. *You* tell me 'tis good poetry—if you mean that there is nothing puerile, nothing bombast or conceited, everything else that is so often found to disfigure poetry, I agree, but will you read it over and over again? Answer me that, Master Lamb." The three letters containing the northern castigation are unhappily lost.

"My back tingles." "Back" is not Lamb's word.

"I am going to change my lodgings." The Lambs were still at 34 Southampton Buildings; they moved to 16 Mitre Court Buildings just before Lady Day, 1801.

"James, Walter, and the parson." In Wordsworth's poem "The Brothers."

Exeter Change, which stood where Burleigh Street now is, was a great building, with bookstalls and miscellaneous stalls on the ground floor and a menagerie above. It was demolished in 1829.

"Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse." Lamb was quoting the old rhyme:—

> As I was going by Charing Cross,
> I saw a black man upon a black horse.
> They told me it was King Charles the First,
> Oh dear! my heart was ready to burst!]

LETTER 84

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

April, 1801.

I WAS not aware that you owed me anything beside that guinea; but I dare say you are right. I live at No. 16 Mitre-court Buildings, a pistol-shot off Baron Maseres'. You must introduce

me to the Baron. I think we should suit one another mainly. He lives on the ground floor for convenience of the gout; I prefer the attic story for the air! He keeps three footmen and two maids; I have neither maid nor laundress, not caring to be troubled with them! His forte, I understand, is the higher mathematics; my turn, I confess, is more to poetry and the belles lettres. The very antithesis of our characters would make up a harmony. You must bring the baron and me together.—N.B. when you come to see me, mount up to the top of the stairs—I hope you are not asthmatical—and come in flannel, for it's pure airy up there. And bring your glass, and I will shew you the Surrey Hills. My bed faces the river so as by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcase with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench walks as I lie in my bed. An excellent tiptoe prospect in the best room: casement windows with small panes, to look more like a cottage. Mind, I have got no bed for you, that's flat; sold it to pay expenses of moving. The very bed on which Manning lay—the friendly, the mathematical Manning! How forcibly does it remind me of the interesting Otway! "The very bed which on thy marriage night gave thee into the arms of Belvidera, by the coarse hands of ruffians—" (upholsterers' men,) &c. My tears will not give me leave to go on. But a bed I will get you, Manning, on condition you will be my day-guest.

I have been ill more than month, with a bad cold, which comes upon me (like a murderer's conscience) about midnight, and vexes me for many hours. I have successively been drugged with Spanish licorice, opium, ipecacuanha, paregoric, and tincture of foxglove (tinctura purpuræ digitalis of the ancients). I am afraid I must leave off drinking.

NOTE

[Francis Maseres (1731-1824), whom Lamb mentions again in his *Elia* essay on "The Old Benchers," was the mathematician (hence his interest to Manning) and reformer. His rooms were at 5 King's Bench Walk. He became Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer in 1773. To the end he wore a three-cornered hat, a wig and ruffles. Priestley praised the Baron's mathematical labours, in which he had the support of William Frend.

"Otway." See "Venice Preserved," Act I., Scene 1. Lamb quotes from memory.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, dated April 6, 1801, in praise of Jeremy Taylor, particularly the *Holy Dying*. Lamb recommends Lloyd to read the story of the Ephesian matron in the eighth section.

Here also should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, containing a very interesting criticism of George Frederick Cooke's acting as Richard III. at Covent Garden. Lamb wrote for the *Morning Post*, January 8, 1802, a criticism of Cooke in this part, which will be found in Vol. I. of the present edition.]

LETTER 85

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

June 29, 1801.

DEAR Sir,—Doctor Christy's Brother and Sister are come to town, and have shown me great civilities. I in return wish to requite them, having, *by God's grace*, principles of generosity *implanted* (as the moralists say) in my nature, which have been duly cultivated and watered by good and religious friends, and a pious education. They have picked up in the northern parts of the island an astonishing admiration of the great author of the New Philosophy in England, and I have ventured to promise their taste an evening's gratification by seeing Mr. Godwin *face* to *face!!!!!* Will you do them and me *in* them the pleasure of drinking tea and supping with me at the *old* number 16 on Friday or Saturday next? An early nomination of the day will very much oblige yours sincerely, CH. LAMB.

NOTE

[Dr. Christy's brother and sister I do not identify.]

LETTER 86

CHARLES LAMB TO WALTER WILSON

August 14th, 1801.

DEAR Wilson.—I am extremely sorry that any serious difference should subsist between us on account of some foolish behaviour of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before—that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very im-

portant difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight and light expressions which I may have made use of in a moment of levity in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings—do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of seriousness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a certainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity or feeling than I at present possess; my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

Believe me, very affectionately yours, C. Lamb.

Note

[Walter Wilson (1781-1847) was, perhaps, at this time, or certainly previously, in the India House with Lamb. Later he became a bookseller, and then, inheriting money, he entered at the Inner Temple. We meet him again later in the correspondence, in connection with his *Life of Defoe*, 1830.

One wonders if the following passage in Hazlitt's essay "On Coffee-House Politicians" in *Table Talk* has any reference to the Richmond incident:—

Elia, the grave and witty, says things not to be surpassed in essence: but the manner is more painful and less a relief to my own thoughts. Some one conceived he could not be an excellent companion, because he was seen walking down the side of the Thames, *passibus iniquis*, after dining at Richmond. The objection was not valid.]

LETTER 87

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[August,] 1801.

DEAR Manning,—I have forborne writing so long (and so have you, for the matter of that), until I am almost ashamed either to write or to forbear any longer. But as your silence may proceed from some worse cause than neglect—from illness, or some

mishap which may have befallen you—I begin to be anxious. You may have been burnt out, or you may have married, or you may have broken a limb, or turned country parson; any of these would be excuse sufficient for not coming to my supper. I am not so unforgiving as the nobleman in "Saint Mark." For me, nothing new has happened to me, unless that the poor "Albion" died last Saturday of the world's neglect, and with it the fountain of my puns is choked up for ever.

All the Lloyds wonder that you do not write to them. They apply to me for the cause. Relieve me from this weight of ignorance, and enable me to give a truly oracular response.

I have been confined some days with swelled cheek and rheumatism—they divide and govern me with a viceroy-headache in the middle. I can neither write nor read without great pain. It must be something like obstinacy that I choose this time to write to you in after many months interruption.

I will close my letter of simple inquiry with an epigram on Mackintosh, the "Vindiciæ Gallicæ"-man—who has got a place at last—one of the last I *did* for the "Albion":—

> "Though thou'rt like Judas, an apostate black,
> In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack;
> When he had gotten his ill-purchas'd pelf,
> He went away, and wisely hanged himself:
> This thou may do at last, yet much I doubt,
> If thou hast any *Bowels* to gush out!"

Yours, as ever, C. Lamb.

Note

[The *Albion* was at the time of its decease owned and edited by John Fenwick, a friend of Lamb's whom we shall meet again. Lamb told the story in the *Elia* essay on "Newspapers" in the following passage:—

"From the office of the *Morning Post* (for we may as well exhaust our Newspaper Reminiscences at once) by change of property in the paper, we were transferred, mortifying exchange! to the office of the Albion Newspaper, late Rackstrow's Museum, in Fleet Street. What a transition—from a handsome apartment, from rose-wood desks, and silver inkstands, to an office—no office, but a *den* rather, but just redeemed from the occupation of dead monsters, of which it seemed redolent—from the centre of loyalty and fashion, to a focus of vulgarity and sedition! Here in murky closet, inadequate from its square contents to the receipt of the two bodies of Editor, and humble paragraph-maker, together at one time, sat in the discharge of his new Editorial functions (the 'Bigod' of Elia) the redoubted John Fenwick.

"F., without a guinea in his pocket, and having left not many in the pockets of his friends whom he might command, had purchased (on tick doubtless) the whole and sole Editorship, Proprietorship, with all the rights and titles (such as they were worth) of the Albion, from one Lovell; of whom we know nothing, save that he had stood in the pillory for a libel on the Prince of Wales. With this hopeless concern—for it had been sinking ever since its commencement, and could now reckon upon not more than a hundred subscribers—F. resolutely determined upon pulling down the Government in the first instance, and making both our fortunes by way of corollary. For seven weeks and more did this infatuated Democrat go about borrowing seven shilling pieces, and lesser coin, to meet the daily demands of the Stamp Office, which allowed no credit to publications of that side in politics. An outcast from politer bread, we attached our small talents to the forlorn fortunes of our friend. Our occupation now was to write treason.

"Recollections of feelings—which were all that now remained from our first boyish heats kindled by the French Revolution, when if we were misled, we erred in the company of some, who are accounted very good men now—rather than any tendency at this time to Republican doctrines—assisted us in assuming a style of writing, while the paper lasted, consonant in no very under-tone to the right earnest fanaticism of F. Our cue was now to insinuate, rather than recommend, possible abdications. Blocks, axes, Whitehall tribunals, were covered with flowers of so cunning a periphrasis—as Mr. Bayes says, never naming the *thing* directly—that the keen eye of an Attorney-General was insufficient to detect the lurking snake among them. There were times, indeed, when we sighed for our more gentleman-like occupation under Stuart. But with change of masters it is ever change of service. Already one paragraph, and another, as we learned afterwards from a gentleman at the Treasury, had begun to be marked at that office, with a view of its being submitted at least to the attention of the proper Law Officers—when an unlucky, or rather lucky epigram from our pen, aimed at Sir J——s M——h, who was on the eve of departing for India to reap the fruits of his apostacy, as F. pronounced it, (it is hardly worth particularising), happening to offend the nice sense of Lord, or, as he then delighted to be called, Citizen Stanhope, deprived F. at once of the last hopes of a guinea from the last patron that had stuck by us; and breaking up our establishment, left us to the safe, but somewhat mortifying, neglect of the Crown Lawyers."

There are, however, in Lamb's account, written thirty years afterwards, some errors. He passed rather from the *Albion* to the *Post*

than from the *Post* to the *Albion* (see the notes to the above essay in Vol. II. of this edition). Sir James Mackintosh was not in 1801 on the eve of departing for India: he did not get the post of Recordership of Bombay until two years later. The epigram probably referred to an earlier rumour of a post for him. His apostasy consisted in recanting in 1800 from the opinions set forth in his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, 1791, a book supporting the French Revolutionists, and in becoming a close friend of his old enemy Burke. I have not succeeded in finding a file of the *Albion*.

"The nobleman in 'St. Mark.'" Lamb was thinking of Luke xiv. 16-24.]

LETTER 88

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. August 31, 1801.]

I HEARD that you were going to China, with a commission from the Wedgwoods to collect hints for their pottery, and to teach the Chinese *perspective*. But I did not know that London lay in your way to Pekin. I am seriously glad of it, for I shall trouble you with a small present for the Emperor of Usbeck Tartary, as you go by his territories: it is a fragment of a "Dissertation on the state of political parties in England at the end of the eighteenth century," which will no doubt be very interesting to his Imperial Majesty. It was written originally in English for the use of the *two* and *twenty* readers of "The Albion" (this *calculation* includes a printer, four pressmen, and a devil); but becoming of no use when "The Albion" stopped, I got it translated into Usbeck Tartar by my good friend Tibet Kulm, who is come to London with a *civil* invitation from the Cham to the English nation to go over to the worship of the Lama.

"The Albion" is dead—dead as nail in door—and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of opening to the "Morning Chronicle," ! ! ! Mister Manning, by means of that common dispenser of benevolence, Mister Dyer. I have not seen Perry the editor yet: but I am preparing a specimen. I shall have a difficult job to manage, for you must know that Mister Perry, in common with the great body of the Whigs, thinks "The Albion" *very low*. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent and less abusive; for, to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abominable pitch; I spared neither age nor sex when my cue was given me. *N'importe* (as they say in French): any climate will

suit me. So you are about to bring your old face-making face to London. You could not come in a better time for my purposes; for I have just lost Rickman, a faint idea of whose character I sent you. He is gone to Ireland for a year or two, to make his fortune; and I have lost by his going, what [it] seems to me I can never recover —*a finished man*. His memory will be to me as the brazen serpent to the Israelites,—I shall look up to it, to keep me upright and honest. But he may yet bring back his honest face to England one day. I wish your affairs with the Emperor of China had not been *so urgent*, that you might have stayed in Great Britain a year or two longer, to have seen him; for, judging from *my own* experience, I almost dare pronounce you never saw his equal. I never saw a man that could be at all a second or substitute for him in any sort.

Imagine that what is here erased was an apology and explanation, perfectly satisfactory you may be sure! for rating this man so highly at the expense of ——, and ——, and ——, and M——, and ——, and ——, and ——. But Mister Burke has explained this phenomenon of our nature very prettily in his letter to a Member of the National Assembly, or else in his Appeal to the old Whigs, I forget which. Do you remember an instance from Homer (who understood these matters tolerably well) of Priam driving away his other sons with expressions of wrath and bitter reproach, when Hector was just dead.

I live where I did, in a *private* manner, because I don't like *state*. Nothing is so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple. C. L.

NOTE

[Manning had taken up Chinese at Cambridge, and in 1800 he had moved to Paris to study the language under Dr. Hagan. He did not, however, go to China until 1806. The Wedgwoods were Coleridge's patrons. Lamb's reference to them is, of course, a joke.

The *Morning Chronicle* was then the chief Whig paper, the principal opponent of the *Morning Post*. I have, I think, traced two or three of Lamb's contributions to the *Chronicle* at this period, but they are not of his best. He quickly moved on to the *Post*, but, as we shall see, only for a short period.

Rickman went to Dublin in 1801 with Abbot, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and was appointed Deputy-Keeper of the Privy Seal. He returned in February, 1802.

The reference to Burke is to his justification of his particular solicitude for the Crown, as the part of the British Constitution then in danger, though not in itself more important than the

other parts, in the "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." The Priam-Hector illustration is there employed.

"Homer." See *The Iliad*, Book 24, lines 311-316. Pope translates thus:—

> Next on his sons his erring fury falls,
> Polites, Paris, Agathon, he calls;
> His threats Diphobus and Dius hear,
> Hippothoüs, Pammon, Helenus the seer,
> And generous Antiphon: for yet these nine
> Survived, sad relics of his numerous line.

Here perhaps should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, returning to Jeremy Taylor, and deprecating a selection from his works, which Robert Lloyd had suggested that Lamb should make. (In 1805 Basil Montagu, afterwards, if not now, a friend of Lamb's, published a volume of *Selections from the Works of Taylor, &c.*) Lamb adds that Manning and Coleridge are in town, and he is making a thorough alteration in the structure of his play ("John Woodvil") for publication.]

LETTER 89

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Sept. 9, 1801.

DEAR Sir,—Nothing runs in my head when I think of your story, but that you should make it as like the life of Savage as possible. That is a known and familiar tale, and its effect on the public mind has been very great. Many of the incidents in the true history are readily made dramatical. For instance, Savage used to walk backwards and forwards o' nights to his mother's window, to catch a glimpse of her, as she passed with a candle. With some such situation the play might happily open. I would plunge my Hero, exactly like Savage, into difficulties and embarrassments, the consequences of an unsettled mind: out of which he may be extricated by the unknown interference of his mother. He should be attended from the beginning by a friend, who should stand in much the same relation towards him as Horatio to Altamont in the play of the Fair Penitent. A character of this sort seems indispensable. This friend might gain interviews with the mother, when the son was refused sight of her. Like Horatio with Calista, he might wring his [her?] soul. Like Horatio, he might learn the secret *first*. He might be exactly in the same perplexing situation, when he had learned it, whether to tell it

or conceal it from the Son (I have still Savage in my head) might *kill* a man (as he did) in an affray—he should receive a pardon, as Savage did—and the mother might interfere to have him *banished*. This should provoke the Friend to demand an interview with her husband, and disclose the whole secret. The husband, refusing to believe anything to her dishonour, should fight with him. The husband repents before he dies. The mother explains and confesses everything in his presence. The son is admitted to an interview with his now acknowledged mother. Instead of embraces, she resolves to abstract herself from all pleasure, even from his sight, in voluntary penance all her days after. This is crude indeed!! but I am totally unable to suggest a better. I am the worst hand in the world at a plot. But I understand enough of passion to predict that your story, with some of Savage's, which has no repugnance, but a natural alliance with it, cannot fail. The mystery of the suspected relationship—the suspicion, generated from slight and forgotten circumstances, coming at last to act as Instinct, and so to be mistaken for Instinct—the son's unceasing pursuit and throwing of himself in his mother's way, something like Falkland's eternal persecution of Williams—the high and intricate passion in the mother, the being obliged to shun and keep at a distance the thing nearest to her heart—to be cruel, where her heart yearns to be kind, without a possibility of explanation. You have the power of life and death and the hearts of your auditors in your hands; still Harris will want a skeleton, and he must have it." I can only put in some sorry hints. The discovery to the son's friend may take place not before the 3d act—in some such way as this. The mother may cross the street—he may point her out to some gay companion of his as the Beauty of Leghorn—the pattern for wives, &c. &c. His companion, who is an Englishman, laughs at his mistake, and knows her to have been the famous Nancy Dawson, or any one else, who captivated the English king. Some such way seems dramatic, and speaks to the Eye. The audience will enter into the Friend's surprise, and into the perplexity of his situation. These Ocular Scenes are so many great landmarks, rememberable headlands and lighthouses in the voyage. Macbeth's witch has a good advice to a magic [? tragic] writer, what to do with his spectator.

"*Show* his *eyes*, and grieve his heart."

The most difficult thing seems to be, What to do with the husband? You will not make him jealous of his own son? that is a stale and an unpleasant trick in Douglas, &c. Can't you keep him out of the way till you want him, as the husband of Isabella

is conveniently sent off till his cue comes? There will be story enough without him, and he will only puzzle all. Catastrophes are worst of all. Mine is most stupid. I only propose it to fulfil my engagement, not in hopes to convert you.

It is always difficult to get rid of a woman at the end of a tragedy. *Men* may fight and die. A woman must either take poison, *which is a nasty trick*, or go mad, which is not fit to be shown, or retire, which is poor, only retiring is most reputable.

I am sorry I can furnish you no better: but I find it extremely difficult to settle my thoughts upon anything but the scene before me, when I am from home, I am from home so seldom. If any, the least hint crosses me, I will write again, and I very much wish to read your plan, if you could abridge and send it. In this little scrawl you must take the will for the deed, for I most sincerely wish success to your play.—Farewell,

C. L.

NOTE

[This and the letter that follows it contain Lamb's suggestions for Godwin's play "Faulkener," upon which he was now meditating, but which was not performed until 1807. Lamb wrote the prologue, a poem in praise of Defoe, since it was in *Roxana*, or at least in one edition of it, that the counterpart to, or portion of, Godwin's plot is found. There, however, the central figure is a daughter, not a son. See the letters to Walter Wilson, pages 586 and 600.

Mr. Swinburne, in the little article to which I have already alluded (see page 197), says of this and the following letter: "Several of Lamb's suggestions, in spite of his own modest disclaimer ('I am the worst hand in the world at a plot'), seem to me, especially as coming from the author of a tragedy memorable alike for sweetness of moral emotion and emptiness of theatrical subject, worthy of note for the instinctive intuition of high dramatic effect implied in their rough and rapid outlines."

Richard Savage, the poet, whose life Johnson wrote, claimed to be the illegitimate son of Lady Macclesfield by Lord Rivers. Savage killed Sinclair in a tavern quarrel in 1727, and was condemned to death. His pardon was obtained by the Countess of Hertford.

"The Fair Penitent" is by Nicholas Rowe.

Falkland and Williams are in Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams*, dramatised by Colman as "The Iron Chest."

"Harris will want a skeleton." Thomas Harris, stage manager of Covent Garden Theatre.

Nancy Dawson (1730?-1767), the famous dancer and *bona roba*.
"Macbeth's witch"—"Macbeth," IV., 1, 110.
"Douglas"—Home's tragedy.
"The husband of Isabella." In Southern's "Fatal Marriage."
For the next letter see Appendix II., page 966.]

LETTER 90

(*Fragment*)

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Margate, Sep. 17, 1801.

I SHALL be glad to come home and talk these matters over with you. I have read your scheme very attentively. That Arabella has been mistress to King Charles is sufficient to all the purposes of the story. It can only diminish that respect we feel for her to make her turn whore to one of the Lords of his Bedchamber. Her son must not know that she has been a whore: it matters not that she has been whore to a *King*: equally in both cases it is against decorum and against the delicacy of a son's respect that he should be privy to it. No doubt, many sons might feel a wayward pleasure in the honourable guilt of their mothers; but is it a true feeling? Is it the best sort of feeling? Is it a feeling to be exposed on theatres to mothers and daughters? Your conclusion (or rather Defoe's) comes far short of the tragic ending, which is always expected; and it is not safe to disappoint. A tragic auditory wants *blood*. They care but little about a man and his wife parting. Besides, what will you do with the son, after all his pursuits and adventures? Even quietly leave him to take guinea-and-a-half lodgings with mamma in Leghorn! O impotent and pacific measures! . . . I am certain that you must mix up some strong ingredients of distress to give a savour to your pottage. I still think that you may, and must, graft the story of Savage upon Defoe. Your hero must *kill* a *man* or *do some thing*. Can't you bring him to the gallows or some great mischief, out of which she *must* have recourse to an explanation with her husband to save him. Think on this. The husband, for instance, has great friends in Court at Leghorn. The son is condemned to death. She cannot teaze him for a stranger. She must tell the whole truth. Or she *may* tease him, as for a stranger, till (like Othello in Cassio's case) he begins to suspect her for her importunity. Or, being pardoned, can she not teaze her husband to get him banished? Something of this I suggested

before. *Both* is best. The murder and the pardon will make business for the fourth act, and the banishment and explanation (by means of the *Friend* I want you to draw) the fifth. You must not open any of the truth to Dawley by means of a letter. A letter is a feeble messenger on the stage. Somebody, the son or his friend, must, as a *coup de main*, be exasperated, and obliged to tell the husband. Damn the husband and his "gentlemanlike qualities." Keep him out of sight, or he will trouble all. Let him be in England on trade, and come home, as Biron does in Isabella, in the fourth act, when he is wanted. I am for introducing situations, sort of counterparts to situations, which have been tried in other plays—*like* but not the *same*. On this principle I recommended a friend like Horatio in the "Fair Penitent," and on this principle I recommend a situation like Othello, with relation to Desdemona's intercession for Cassio. By-scenes may likewise receive hints. The son may see his mother at a mask or feast, as Romeo, Juliet. The festivity of the company contrasts with the strong perturbations of the individuals. Dawley may be told his wife's past unchastity at a mask by some witch-character—as Macbeth upon the heath, in dark sentences. This may stir his brain, and be forgot, but come in aid of stronger proof hereafter. From this, what you will perhaps call whimsical way of counterparting, this honest stealing, and original mode of plagiarism, much yet, I think, remains to be sucked. Excuse these abortions. I thought you would want the draught soon again, and I would not send it empty away.—Yours truly,

WILLIAM GODWIN!!!

Somers Town, 17th Sept., 1801.

NOTE

[The point of signing this letter with Godwin's name and adding his address (Lamb, it will be noticed, was then at Margate) is not clear. In Letter 443 (see page 785), where Lamb plays the same trick on Hood, the reason is plain enough.

Here should come four letters from Lamb to John Rickman, recently made public by the late Canon Ainger. See Appendix II., page 966.]

LETTER 91

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

To
John Rickman, Esqr.,
Dublin Castle.

[No date. ? November, 1801.]

A LETTER from G. Dyer will probably accompany this. I wish I could convey to you any notion of the whimsical scenes I have been witness to in this fortnight past. 'Twas on Tuesday week the poor heathen scrambled up to my door about breakfast time. He came thro' a violent rain with no neckcloth on, and a *beard* that made him a spectacle to men and angels, and tap'd at the door. Mary open'd it, and he stood stark still and held a paper in his hand importing that he had been ill with a fever. He either wouldn't or couldn't speak except by signs. When you went to comfort him he put his hand upon his heart and shook his head and told us his complaint lay where no medicines could reach it. I was dispatch'd for Dr. Dale, Mr. Phillips of St. Paul's Church yard, and Mr. Frend, who is to be his executor. George solemnly delivered into Mr. Frend's hands and mine an old burnt preface that had been in the fire, with injunctions which we solemnly vow'd to obey that it should be printed after his death with his last corrections, and that some account should be given to the world why he had not fulfill'd his engagement with subscribers. Having done this and borrow'd two guineas of his bookseller (to whom he imparted in confidence that he should leave a great many loose papers behind him which would only want methodizing and arranging to prove very lucrative to any bookseller after his death), he laid himself down on my bed in a mood of complacent resignation. By the aid of meat and drink put into him (for I all along suspected a vacuum) he was enabled to sit up in the evening, but he had not got the better of his intolerable fear of dying; he expressed such philosophic indifference in his speech and such frightened apprehensions in his physiognomy that if he had truly been dying, and I had known it, I could not have kept my countenance. In particular, when the doctor came and ordered him to take little white powders (I suppose of chalk or alum, to humour him), he ey'd him with a *suspicion* which I could not account for; he has since explain'd that he took it for granted Dr. Dale knew his situation and had ordered him these powders to hasten his departure that he might suffer as little pain as possible. Think what an aspect the heathen put on with these fears upon a dirty face.

To recount all his freaks for two or three days while he thought he was going, and how the fit operated, and sometimes the man got uppermost and sometimes the author, and he had this excellent person to serve, and he must correct some proof sheets for Phillips, and he could not bear to leave his subscribers unsatisfy'd, but he must not think of these things now, he was going to a place where he should satisfy all his debts—and when he got a little better he began to discourse what a happy thing it would be if there was a place where all the good men and women in the world might meet, meaning heav'n, and I really believe for a time he had doubts about his soul, for he was very near, if not quite, light-headed. The fact was he had not had a good meal for some days and his little dirty Neice (whom he sent for with a still dirtier Nephew, and hugg'd him, and bid them farewell) told us that unless he dines out he subsists on tea and gruels. And he corroborated this tale by ever and anon complaining of sensations of gnawing which he felt about his *heart*, which he mistook his stomach to be, and sure enough these gnawings were dissipated after a meal or two, and he surely thinks that he has been rescued from the jaws of death by Dr. Dale's white powders. He is got quite well again by nursing, and chirps of odes and lyric poetry the day long—he is to go out of town on Monday, and with him goes the dirty train of his papers and books which follow'd him to our house. I shall not be sorry when he takes his nipt carcase out of my bed, which it has occupied, and vanishes with all his Lyric lumber, but I will endeavour to bring him in future into a method of dining at least once a day. I have proposed to him to dine with me (and he has nearly come into it) whenever he does not go out; and pay me. I will take his money beforehand and he shall eat it out. If I don't it will go all over the world. Some worthless relations, of which the dirty little devil that looks after him and a still more dirty nephew are component particles, I have reason to think divide all his gains with some lazy worthless authors that are his constant satellites. The Literary Fund has voted him seasonably £20 and if I can help it he shall spend it on his own carcase. I have assisted him in arranging the remainder of what he calls Poems and he will get rid of 'em I hope in another [*Here three lines are torn away at the foot of the page, wherein Lamb makes the transition from George Dyer to another poor author, George Burnett*].

I promised Burnet to write when his parcel went. He wants me to certify that he is more awake than you think him. I believe he may be by this time, but he is so full of self-opinion that I fear whether he and Phillips will ever do together. What he is to do for Phillips he whimsically seems to consider more as a favor done *to* P. than a job *from* P. He still persists to call employ-

[illegible] about the insolence of booksellers [illegible] Poor devil! he is not launched upon [illegible] afterthought. I write plainly about [illegible] freely if he read this treacherous [illegible] about him, and that [? it] nettles me [illegible] If he is not serv'd he will never [illegible] to Southey, which I suppose [illegible] have been furnishing copy for [illegible] the causes of his imbecility. [illegible] ascribing more to the structure [illegible] from nature, his pride from [illegible]

[illegible] only send my remembrance [illegible] him that Burnett is not to [illegible] opening, to see himself a [illegible] enough to do this. [illegible] I am all this time [illegible] with G. Burnett and [illegible] freely of people behind [illegible] is better than Godwin's [illegible]

[illegible] George in the way of an [illegible] case], but you did [illegible] he his *only chance* of [illegible] *assertions*, as he calls [illegible] work and he has no [illegible] he talks big in his [illegible] an alteration and [illegible] him to honor or [illegible] of a fever, not [illegible] into plain English, he [illegible] starve, and then he [illegible] there's a lion in the [illegible] yesterday. I [illegible] if he could not get [illegible] him with one; it was [illegible] was true with some [illegible] oblige G. B.! Lord [illegible] together a host [illegible] men in green. [illegible] are his crab-lice and [illegible] chops are their [illegible] *to be rich*. [illegible] I can scarcely con- [illegible] with all sects

in the world and he will faithfully tell all he knows. Every body will read it; and if it is not done according to my fancy I promise to put him in a novel when he dies. Nothing shall escape *me*. If you think it feasible, whenever you write you may encourage him. Since he has been so close with me I have perceiv'd the workings of his inordinate vanity, his gigantic attention to particles and to prevent open vowels in his odes, his solicitude that the public may not lose any tittle of his poems by his death, and all the while his utter ignorance that the world don't care a pin about his odes and his criticisms, a fact which every body knows but himself—he *is a rum genius*. C. L.

NOTE

[See Appendix II., page 967, for further references to Dyer. Also for notes on letters to Rickman belonging to this period.

Dr. Dale would probably be Thomas Dale of Devonshire Square, Bishopsgate, who had a large city practice in those days. He died in 1816.

Phillips of St. Paul's Churchyard. See note on page 123.

"An old burnt preface." See note on page 208.

George Burnett we have already met once in the correspondence (see page 111). He was born probably in 1776. He went to Balliol, met Southey and Coleridge and became a Pantisocratist. Subsequently he became a dissenting minister at Yarmouth, and then a medical student at Edinburgh; and later he succeeded George Dyer as tutor in the family of Lord Stanhope. He became one of Phillips' hacks, as Lamb's letter tells us. His principal work was the *Specimens of English Prose Writers*, 1807, in three volumes, in which it has been stated that Lamb had a hand. He died in want in 1811.

The reference to Southey being in Dublin is explained by the fact that, through Rickman, he had been appointed private secretary to Mr. Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, at a salary of £400. He did not long retain the post, as it was vexatious and the duties very irregular.]

LETTER 92

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date. ? Feb. 15, 1802.]

NOT a sentence, not a syllable of Trismegistus, shall be lost through my neglect. I am his word-banker, his storekeeper of puns and syllogisms. You cannot conceive (and if Trismegistus

cannot, no man can) the strange joy which I felt at the receipt of a letter from Paris. It seemed to give me a learned importance, which placed me above all who had not Parisian correspondents. Believe that I shall carefully husband every scrap, which will save you the trouble of memory, when you come back. You cannot write things so trifling, let them only be about Paris, which I shall not treasure. In particular, I must have parallels of actors and actresses. I must be told if any building in Paris is at all comparable to St. Paul's, which, contrary to the usual mode of that part of our nature called admiration, I have looked up to with unfading wonder every morning at ten o'clock, ever since it has lain in my way to business. At noon I casually glance upon it, being hungry; and hunger has not much taste for the fine arts. Is any night-walk comparable to a walk from St. Paul's to Charing Cross, for lighting and paving, crowds going and coming without respite, the rattle of coaches and the cheerfulness of shops? Have you seen a man guillotined yet? is it as good as hanging? are the women *all* painted, and the men *all* monkeys? or are there not a *few* that look like *rational* of *both sexes?* Are you and the First Consul *thick?* All this expense of ink I may fairly put you to, as your letters will not be solely for my proper pleasure, but are to serve as memoranda and notices, helps for short memory, a kind of Rumfordising recollection, for yourself on your return. Your letter was just what a letter should be, crammed and very funny. Every part of it pleased me till you came to Paris; and your damn'd philosophical indolence or indifference stung me. You cannot stir from your rooms till you know the language! What the devil!—are men nothing but word-trumpets? are men all tongue and ear? have these creatures, that you and I profess to know *something about*, no faces, gestures, gabble: no folly, no absurdity, no induction of French education upon the abstract idea of men and women, no similitude nor dissimilitude to English! Why! thou damn'd Smellfungus! your account of your landing and reception, and Bullen (I forget how you spell it—it was spelt my way in Harry the Eighth's time,) was exactly in that minute style which strong impressions INSPIRE (writing to a Frenchman, I write as a Frenchman would). It appears to me as if I should die with joy at the first landing in a foreign country. It is the nearest pleasure, which a grown man can substitute for that unknown one, which he can never know—the pleasure of the first entrance into life from the womb. I dare say, in a short time, my habits would come back like a "stronger man" armed, and drive out that new pleasure; and I should soon sicken for known objects. Nothing has transpired here that seems to me of sufficient importance to send dry-shod over the water: but I suppose you will want to be told some news. The best and the worst

to me is, that I have given up two guineas a week at the "Post," and regained my health and spirits, which were upon the wane. I grew sick, and Stuart unsatisfied. *Ludisti satis, tempus abire est;* I must cut closer, that's all. Mister Fell—or as you, with your usual facetiousness and drollery, call him, Mr. F + ll—has stopped short in the middle of his play. Some *friend* has told him that it has not the least merit in it. Oh! that I had the rectifying of the Litany! I would put in a *libera nos (Scriptores videlicet) ab amicis!* That's all the news. *A propos* (is it pedantry, writing to a Frenchman, to express myself sometimes by a French word, when an English one would not do as well? methinks, my thoughts fall naturally into it).——

In all this time I have done but one thing, which I reckon tolerable, and that I will transcribe, because it may give you pleasure, being a picture of *my* humours. You will find it in my last page. It absurdly is a first Number of a series, thus strangled in its birth.

More news! The Professor's Rib has come out to be a damn'd disagreeable woman, so much so as to drive me and some more old cronies from his house. If a man will keep snakes in his house, he must not wonder if people are shy of coming to see him because of the *snakes*. C. L.

Apropos, I think you wrong about my play. All the omissions are right. And the supplementary scene, in which Sandford narrates the manner in which his master is affected, is the best in the book. It stands where a hodge-podge of German puerilities used to stand. I insist upon it that you like that scene. Love me, love that scene. I will now transcribe the "Londoner" (No. 1), and wind up all with affection and humble servant at the end.

THE LONDONER. No. 1

In compliance with my own particular humour, no less than with thy laudable curiosity, Reader, I proceed to give thee some account of my history and habits. I was born under the nose of St. Dunstan's steeple, just where the conflux of the eastern and western inhabitants of this twofold city meet and justle in friendly opposition at Temple-bar. The same day which gave me to the world saw London happy in the celebration of her great annual feast. This I cannot help looking upon as a lively type or omen of the future great goodwill which I was destined to bear toward the City, resembling in kind that solicitude which every Chief Magistrate is supposed to feel for whatever concerns her interests and well-being. Indeed, I consider myself in some sort a speculative Lord Mayor of London: for, though circumstances unhappily preclude me from the hope of ever arriving at the dignity of a gold

chain and spital sermon, yet thus much will I say of myself, in truth, that *Whittington* himself with his *Cat* (just emblem of *vigilance* and a *furred gown*), never went beyond me in affection, which I bear to the citizens. Shut out from serving them in the most honourable mode, I aspire to do them benefit in another, scarcely less honourable; and if I cannot, by virtue of office, commit vice and irregularity to the *material Counter*, I will, at least, erect a *spiritual one*, where they shall be *laid fast by the heels*. In plain words, I will do my best endeavour to *write them down*.

To return to *myself* (from whence my zeal for the Public good is perpetually causing me to digress), I will let thee, Reader, into certain more of my peculiarities. I was born (as you have heard), bred, and have passed most of my time, in a *crowd*. This has begot in me an entire affection for that way of life, amounting to an almost insurmountable aversion from solitude and rural scenes. This aversion was never interrupted or suspended, except for a few years in the younger part of my life, during a period in which I had fixed my affections upon a charming young woman. Every man, while the *passion* is upon him, is for a time at least addicted to groves and meadows, and purling streams. During this short period of my existence, I contracted just enough familiarity with rural objects to understand tolerably well ever after the *Poets*, when they declaim in such passionate terms in favour of a *country life*.

For my own part, now the *fit* is long past, I have no hesitation in declaring, that a mob of happy faces crowding up at the pit door of Drury-Lane Theatre just at the hour of five, give me ten thousand finer pleasures, than I ever received from all the flocks of *silly sheep*, that have whitened the plains of *Arcadia* or *Epsom Downs*.

This passion for crowds is no where feasted so full as in London. The man must have a rare *recipe* for melancholy, who can be dull in Fleet-street. I am naturally inclined to *hypochondria*, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her crowded Strand, and fed my humour, till tears have wetted my cheek for inutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the shifting scenes of a skilful Pantomime.

The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops, where Fancy (miscalled Folly) is supplied with perpetual new gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesmen—things which live by bowing,

and things which exist but for homage, do not affect me with disgust; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meanness. I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honour at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the tumultuous detectors of a pickpocket. The salutary astonishment with which an execution is surveyed, convinces me more forcibly than an hundred volumes of abstract polity, that the universal instinct of man, in all ages, has leaned to order and good government. Thus an art of extracting morality, from the commonest incidents of a town life, is attained by the same well-natured alchemy, with which the *Foresters* of *Arden* in a beautiful country

> Found tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing—

Where has spleen her food but in London—humour, interest, curiosity, suck at her measureless breasts without a possibility of being satiated. Nursed amid her noise, her crowds, her beloved smoke—what have I been doing all my life, if I have not lent out my heart with usury to such scenes?

Reader, in the course of my peregrinations about the great city, it is hard, if I have not picked up matter, which may serve to amuse thee, as it has done me, a winter evening long. When next we meet, I purpose opening my budget—Till when, farewell.

"What is all this about?" said Mrs. Shandy. "A story of a cock and a bull," said Yorick: and so it is; but Manning will take good-naturedly what *God will send him* across the water: only I hope he won't *shut* his *eyes*, and *open* his *mouth*, as the children say, for that is the way to *gape*, and not to *read*. Manning, continue your laudable purpose of making me your register. I will render back all your remarks; and *I*, *not you*, shall have received usury by having read them. In the mean time, may the great Spirit have you in his keeping, and preserve our Englishmen from the inoculation of frivolity and sin upon French earth.

Allons—or what is it you say, instead of *good-bye?*

Mary sends her kind remembrance, and covets the remarks equally with me. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The reference to the "word-banker" and "register" is explained by Manning's first letter to Lamb from Paris, in which he says: "I . . . beg you to keep all my letters. I hope to send you

many—and I may in the course of time, make some observations that I shall wish to recall to my memory when I return to England."

"Are you and the First Consul *thick?*"—Napoleon, with whom Manning was destined one day to be on terms. In 1803, on the declaration of war, when he wished to return to England, Manning's was the only passport that Napoleon signed; again, in 1817, on returning from China, Manning was wrecked near St. Helena, and, waiting on the island for a ship, conversed there with the great exile.

"Rumfordising." A word coined by Lamb from Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count von Rumford, the founder of the Royal Institution, the deviser of the Rumford stove, and a tireless scientific and philosophical experimentalist.

"Smellfungus." Evidently an allusion to Sterne's attack on Smollett, in *The Sentimental Journey:* "The lamented Smelfungus travelled from Boulogne to Paris, from Paris to Rome, and so on; but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discoloured or distorted."

"Bullen"—Boulogne.

"Stronger man." See Luke xi. 21, 22.

"The *Post.*" Lamb had been writing criticisms of plays; but Stuart, as we have seen, wanted them on the same night as the performance and Lamb found this impossible.

"*Ludisti satis, tempus abire est.*" Horace, Epist. II., 2, 214-215:—

> Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti:
> Tempus abire tibi est.

(Thou hast had enough of the pleasures of life, enough of feasting and revellings; it is time for thee to depart.)

"Fell"—R. Fell, author of a *Tour through the Batavian Republic*, 1801. Later he compiled a *Life of Charles James Fox*, 1808. Lamb knew him, as well as Fenwick, through Godwin. See note on page 967 of Appendix II.

"*Libera nos . . .*" The phrase "Defend me from my friends; I can defend myself against my enemies," is attributed to Maréchal Villars, when taking leave of Louis XIV.

"I have done but one thing"—"The Londoner," referred to later.

"The Professor's Rib"—Godwin's second wife, the widow Clairmont (mother of Jane Clairmont), whom he had married in December, 1801.

"*Apropos*, I think you wrong about my play." The portion beginning with these words is usually printed as a separate letter. But I think it formed only the postscript to that which precedes.

The earlier reference to "The Londoner" is practically proof. *John Woodvil* had just been published and Lamb had sent Manning a copy. Manning, in return, had written from Paris early in February: "I showed your Tragedy to Holcroft, who had taste enough to discover that 'tis full of poetry—but the plot he condemns *in toto*. Tell me how it succeeds. I think you were ill advised to retrench so much. I miss the beautiful Branches you have lopped off and regret them. In some of the pages the sprinkling of words is so thin as to be quite *outré*. There you were wrong again."

With reference to *John Woodvil* see *Poems and Plays*, Vol. V. of this edition.

"The Londoner" was published in the *Morning Post*, February 1, 1802. I have quoted the article from that paper, as Lamb's copy for Manning has disappeared. Compare passages on London on pages 194 and 210. Concerning "The Londoner" Manning wrote, in his next letter—April 6, 1802—"I like your 'Londoner' very much, there is a deal of happy fancy in it, but it is not strong enough to be seen by the generality of readers, yet if you were to write a volume of essays in the same stile you might be sure of its succeeding."]

LETTER 93

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

16, Mitre Court Buildings, Inner Temple, April 10, 1802.

DEAR Rickman,—The enclosed letter explains itself. It will save me the danger of a corporal interview with the man-eater who, if very sharp-set, may take a fancy to me, if you will give me a short note, declaratory of probabilities. These from him who hopes to see you once or twice more before he goes hence, to be no more seen: for there is no tipple nor tobacco in the grave, whereunto he hasteneth. C. LAMB.

How clearly the Goul writes, and like a gentleman!

NOTE

[A friend of Burnett, named Simonds, is meant. Lamb calls him a "Goul" in another letter, and elsewhere says he eats strange flesh.]

LETTER 94

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date. (?) Early April, 1802.]

MY dear Manning,—Although something of the latest, and after two months' waiting, your letter was highly gratifying. Some parts want a little explication; for example, "the god-like face of the First Consul." *What god* does he most resemble? Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo? or the god Serapis who, flying (as Egyptian chronicles deliver) from the fury of the dog Anubis (the hieroglyph of an English mastiff), lighted on Monomotapa (or the land of apes), by some thought to be Old France, and there set up a tyranny, &c. Our London prints of him represent him gloomy and sulky, like an angry Jupiter. I hear that he is very small, even less than me, who am "less than the least of the Apostles," at least than they are painted in the Vatican. I envy you your access to this great man, much more than your séances and conversaziones, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. What you assert concerning the actors of Paris, that they exceed our comedians, "bad as ours are," is *impossible*. In one sense it may be true, that their fine gentlemen, in what is called genteel comedy, may possibly be more brisk and *dégagé* than Mr. Caulfield or Mr. Whitfield; but have any of them the power to move *laughter in excess?* or can a Frenchman *laugh?* Can they batter at your judicious ribs till they *shake*, nothing loth to be so shaken? This is John Bull's criterion, and it shall be mine. You are Frenchified. Both your tastes and morals are corrupt and perverted. By-and-by you will come to assert, that Buonaparte is as great a general as the old Duke of Cumberland, and deny that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen. Read "Henry the Fifth" to restore your orthodoxy. All things continue at a stay-still in London. I cannot repay your new novelties with my stale reminiscences. Like the prodigal, I have spent my patrimony, and feed upon the superannuated chaff and dry husks of repentance; yet sometimes I remember with pleasure the hounds and horses, which I kept in the days of my prodigality. I find nothing new, nor anything that has so much of the gloss and dazzle of novelty, as may rebound in narrative, and cast a reflective glimmer across the channel. Something I will say about people that you and I know. Fenwick is still in debt, and the Professor has not done making love to his new spouse. I think he never looks into an almanack, or he would have found by the calendar that the honeymoon was extinct a moon ago. Southey is Secretary to the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer; £400 a year.

Stoddart is turned Doctor of Civil Law, and dwells in Doctors' Commons. I fear *his* commons are short, as they say. Did I send you an epitaph I scribbled upon a poor girl who died at nineteen, a good girl and a pretty girl, and a clever girl, but strangely neglected by all her friends and kin?

> "Under this cold marble stone
> Sleep the sad remains of one
> Who, when alive, by few or none
> Was loved, as loved she might have been,
> If she prosperous days had seen,
> Or had thriving been, I ween.
> Only this cold funeral stone
> Tells she was beloved by one,
> Who on the marble graves his moan."

Brief, and pretty, and tender, is it not? I send you this, being the only piece of poetry I have *done*, since the muses all went with T. M. to Paris. I have neither stuff in my brain, nor paper in my drawer, to write you a longer letter. Liquor and company and wicked tobacco a'nights, have quite dispericraniated me, as one may say; but you who spiritualise upon Champagne may continue to write long lettters, and stuff 'em with amusement to the end. Too long they cannot be, any more than a codicil to a will which leaves me sundry parks and manors not specified in the deed. But don't be *two months* before you write again. These from merry old England, on the day of her valiant patron St. George.

C. Lamb.

Note

[This letter is usually dated 1803, but I feel sure it should be 1802. Southey had given up his Irish appointment in that year, and Godwin's honeymoon began in December, 1801.

"The dog Anubis." See Milton's ode on the Nativity, Hymn 23.

"Even less than me." Mr. W. C. Hazlitt gives in *Mary and Charles Lamb* a vivid impression of Lamb's spare figure: a farmer at Widford, Mr. Charles Tween, himself not a big man, told Mr. Hazlitt that when walking out with Lamb he would place his hands under his arm and lift him over the stiles as if it were nothing. Napoleon's height was 5 feet 6 or 7 inches.

Thomas Caulfield, a brother of the antiquary and print-seller, James Caulfield, was a comedian and mimic at Drury Lane; Whitfield was an actor at Drury Lane, who later moved to Covent Garden.

"An epitaph." These lines were written upon a friend of Rickman's, Mary Druitt of Wimborne. They were printed in the *Morning Post* for February 7, 1804, signed C. L. See page 268 and notes to Vol. V. of this edition.

For the rest of the letter see page 768.]

LETTER 95

(*Fragment*)

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Sept. 8th, 1802.

DEAR Coleridge,—I thought of not writing till we had performed some of our commissions; but we have been hindered from setting about them, which yet shall be done to a tittle. We got home very pleasantly on Sunday. Mary is a good deal fatigued, and finds the difference of going to a place, and coming *from* it. I feel that I shall remember your mountains to the last day I live. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the lady. I do not remember any very strong impression while they were present; but, being gone, their mementos are shelved in my brain. We passed a very pleasant little time with the Clarksons. The Wordsworths are at Montagu's rooms, near neighbours to us. They dined with us yesterday, and I was their guide to Bartlemy Fair!

NOTE

[In the summer of 1802 the Lambs paid a sudden visit to Coleridge at Keswick. Afterwards they went to Grasmere, although the Wordsworths were away from home; but they saw Thomas Clarkson, the philanthropist, then living at Ullswater (see the next letter). They had reached London again on September 5. Procter records that on being asked how he felt when among the lakes and mountains, Lamb replied that in order to bring down his thoughts from their almost painful elevation to the sober regions of life, he was obliged to think of the ham and beef shop near St. Martin's Lane.

This letter, the original of which is I know not where, is here, for dismal copyright reasons, very imperfectly given. Mr. Macdonald prints it in full. Mrs. Gilchrist in her memoir of Mary Lamb supplies one omitted passage, as follows:—

"Lloyd has written me a fine letter of friendship all about himself and Sophia and love and cant which I have not answered. I have not given up the idea of writing to him but it will be done very plainly and sincerely, without acrimony."

Mr. Dykes Campbell, in his edition of Coleridge, supplies another omitted passage:—

"I was pleased to recognise your blank-verse poem (the Picture) in the *Morn. Post* of Monday. It reads very well, and I feel some dignity in the notion of being able to understand it better than most Southern readers."

Coleridge's poem "The Picture; or, The Lover's Resolution," was printed in the *Morning Post* for September 6. Its scenery was probably pointed out to Lamb by Coleridge at Keswick.

Basil Montagu, the lawyer, an old friend of Wordsworth's. It is his son Edward who figures in the "Anecdote for Fathers."

Bartholomew Fair, held at Smithfield, continued until 1855, but its glories had been decreasing for some years.]

LETTER 96

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

24th Sept., 1802, London.

MY dear Manning,—Since the date of my last letter, I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly never intend to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year prevented that plan. My next scheme, (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed Peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was a tour to the Lakes. I set out with Mary to Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice; for my time being precious did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c. &c. We thought we had got into fairy-land. But that went off (as it never came again—while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfort-

able study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half-bed, &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married.[1] So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater—I forget the name—to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about, and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and work. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet-Street and the Strand are better

[1] See Appendix II., page 968.

places to live in for good and all than among Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year—two, three years—among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet-Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think: *i.e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.* the night, the glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant!—O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard; but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion (that has been: nam hic cæstus artemque repono), is turned editor of a "Naval Chronicle." Godwin (with a pitiful artificial wife) continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That Bitch has detached Marshall from his house, Marshall the man who went to sleep when the "Ancient Mariner" was reading: the old, steady, unalterable friend of the Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. How I hate *this part* of a letter. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i.e.* to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted &c. I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

C. Lamb.

Note

[Lamb suggests in Letter 54 that he knew some French.

"Where the Devil sits." A reference probably to Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Book XI., where the reader must find it for himself.

"Like an intrenchment." Lamb probably had this simile from Coleridge, who often used it.

"*Nam hic cæstus artemque repono.*" Virgil, *Æneid*, V., 484, "Hic victor cæstus artemque repono"—"Here victorious I lay aside my cestus and my art."

Marshall we met in the letters to Godwin of December 14, 1800, page 201, and to Manning, December 16, 1800, page 203.

"Holcroft"—Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809), a miscellaneous writer, who is best known by his play "The Road to Ruin." Lamb says of him in his "Letter to Southey" (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 232) that he was "one of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men" that he had ever met.]

LETTER 97

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

October 9, 1802.

CAROLUS AGNUS COLERIDGIO SUO S.

CARISSIME—Scribis, ut nummos scilicet epistolarios solvam et postremo in Tartara abeam: immo tu potius Tartaricum (ut aiunt) deprehendisti, qui me vernaculâ meâ linguâ pro scribâ conductitio per tot annos satis eleganter usum ad Latinè impure et canino fere ore latrandum per tuasmet epistolas benè compositas et concinnatas percellere studueris. Conabor tamen: Attamen vereor, ut Ædes istas nostri Christi, inter quas tantâ diligentiâ magistri improbâ [?improbi] bonis literulis, quasi per clysterem quendam injectis, infrà supràque olim penitùs imbutus fui, Barnesii et Marklandii doctissimorum virorum nominibus adhuc gaudentes, barbarismis meis peregrinis et aliunde quæsitis valde dehonestavero [*sic*]. Sed pergere quocunque placet. Adeste igitur, quotquot estis, conjugationum declinationumve turmæ, terribilia spectra, et tu imprimis ades, Umbra et Imago maxima obsoletæ (Diis gratiæ) Virgæ, quâ novissime in mentem receptâ, horrescunt subito natales [nates], et parum deest quo minùs braccas meas ultro usque ad crura demittam, et ipse puer pueriliter ejulem.

Ista tua Carmina Chamouniana satis grandia esse mihi constat; sed hoc mihi nonnihil displicet, quòd in iis illæ montium Grisosonum inter se responsiones totidem reboant anglicè, *God, God*, haud aliter atque temet audivi tuas montes Cumbrianas resonare docentes, *Tod, Tod*, nempe Doctorem infelicem: vocem certe haud Deum Sonantem. Pro cæteris plaudo.

Itidem comparationes istas tuas satis callidas et lepidas certè novi: sed quid hoc ad verum? cum illi Consulari viro et *mentem*

irritabilem istam Julianam : et etiam *astutias frigidulas* quasdam Augusto propriores, nequaquam congruenter uno afflatu comparationis causâ insedisse affirmaveris : necnon nescio quid similitudinis etiam cum Tiberio tertio in loco solicite produxeris. Quid tibi equidem cum uno vel altero Cæsare, cùm universi Duodecim ad comparationes tuas se ultro tulerint ? Præterea, vetustati adnutans, comparationes iniquas odi.

Istas Wordsworthianas nuptias (vel potius cujusdam *Edmundii* tui) te retulisse mirificum gaudeo. Valeas, Maria, fortunata nimium, et antiquæ illæ Mariæ Virgini (comparatione plusquam Cæsareanâ) forsitan comparanda, quoniam " beata inter mulieres : " et etiam fortasse Wordsworthium ipsum tuum maritum Angelo Salutatori æquare fas erit, quoniam e Cœlo (ut ille) descendunt et Musæ et ipsi Musicolæ : at Wordsworthium Musarum observantissimum semper novi. Necnon te quoque affinitate hâc novâ, Dorothea, gratulor : et tu certe alterum *donum Dei*.

Istum Ludum, quem tu, Coleridgi, Americanum garris, a Ludo (ut Ludi sunt) maximè abhorrentem prætereo : nempe quid ad Ludum attinet, totius illæ gentis Columbianæ, a nostrâ gente, eadem stirpe ortâ, ludi singuli causa voluntatem perperam alienare ? Quæso ego materiam ludi : tu Bella ingeris.

Denique valeas, et quid de Latinitate meâ putes, dicas : facias ut opossum illum nostrum volantem vel (ut tu malis) quendam Piscem errabundum, a me salvum et pulcherrimum esse jubeas. Valeant uxor tua cum Hartleiio nostro. Soror mea salva est et ego : vos et ipsa salvere jubet. Ulterius progrediri [? progredi] non liquet : homo sum æratus.

P.S.—Pene mihi exciderat, apud me esse Librorum a Johanno Miltono Latinè scriptorum volumina duo, quæ (Deo volente) cum cæteris tuis libris ocyùs citiùs per Maria [?] ad te missura [*sic*] curabo ; sed me in hoc tali genere rerum nullo modo *festinantem* novisti : habes confitentem reum. Hoc solum dici [*sic*] restat, prædicta volumina pulchra esse et omnia opera Latina J. M. in se continere. Circa defensionem istam Pro Pop°. Ang°. acerrimam in præsens ipse præclaro gaudio moror.

Jussa tua Stuartina faciam ut diligenter colam.

Iterum iterumque valeas :

Et facias memor sis nostri.

NOTE

[I append a translation from the pen of Mr. Stephen Gwynn :—

CHARLES LAMB TO HIS FRIEND COLERIDGE, GREETING.

DEAR FRIEND—You write that I am to pay my debt, to wit in coin of correspondence, and finally that I am to go to Tartarus :

no but it is you have caught a Tartar (as the saying is), since after all these years employing my own vernacular tongue, and prettily enough for a hired penman, you have set about to drive me by means of your well composed and neatly turned epistles to gross and almost doggish barking in the Latin. Still, I will try: And yet I fear that the Hostel of our Christ,—wherein by the exceeding diligence of a relentless master I was in days gone by deeply imbued from top to bottom with polite learning, instilled as it were by a clyster—which still glories in the names of the erudite Barnes and Markland, will be vilely dishonoured by my outlandish and adscititious barbarisms. But I am determined to proceed, no matter whither. Be with me therefore all ye troops of conjugations and declensions, dread spectres, and approach thou chiefest, Shade and Phantom of the disused (thank Heaven) Birch, at whose entry to my imagination a sudden shiver takes my rump, and a trifle then more would make me begin to let down my breeches to my calves, and turning boy, howl boyishly.

That your Ode at Chamounix is a fine thing I am clear; but here is a thing offends me somewhat, that in the ode your answers of the Grison mountains to each other should so often echo in English God, God—in the very tone that I have heard your own lips teaching your Cumbrian mountains to resound Tod, Tod, meaning the unlucky doctor—a syllable assuredly of no Godlike sound. For the rest, I approve.

Moreover, I certainly recognise that your comparisons are acute and witty; but what has this to do with truth? since you have given to the great Consul at once that irritable mind of Julius, and also a kind of cold cunning, more proper to Augustus—attributing incongruous characteristics in one breath for the sake of your comparison: nay, you have even in the third instance laboriously drawn out some likeness to Tiberius. What had you to do with one Cæsar, or a second, when the whole Twelve offered themselves to your comparison? Moreover, I agree with antiquity, and think comparisons odious.

Your Wordsworth nuptials (or rather the nuptials of a certain Edmund of yours) fill me with joy in your report. May you prosper, Mary, fortunate beyond compare, and perchance comparable to that ancient Virgin Mary (a comparison more than Cæsarean) since "blessed art thou among women:" perhaps also it will be no impiety to compare Wordsworth himself your husband to the Angel of Salutation, since (like the angel) from heaven descend both Muses and the servants of the Muses: whose devoutest votary I always know Wordsworth to be. Congratulations to thee, Dorothea, in this new alliance: you also assuredly are another "gift of God."

As for your Ludus [Lloyd], whom you talk of as an "American",

I pass him by as no sportsman (as sport goes): what kind of sport is it, to alienate utterly the good will of the whole Columbian people, our own kin, sprung of the same stock, for the sake of one Ludd [Lloyd]? I seek the material for diversion: you heap on War.

Finally, fare you well, and pray tell me what you think of my Latinity. Kindly wish health and beauty from me to our flying possum or (as you prefer to call it) roving Fish. Good health to your wife and my friend Hartley. My sister and I are well. She also sends you greeting. I do not see how to get on farther: I am a man in debt [or possibly in "fetters"].

P.S.—I had almost forgot, I have by me two volumes of the Latin writings of John Milton, which (D.V.) I will have sent you sooner or later by Mary: but you know me no way precipitate in this kind: the accused pleads guilty. This only remains to be said, that the aforesaid volumes are handsome and contain all the Latin works of J. M. At present I dwell with much delight on his vigorous defence of the English people.

I will be sure to observe diligently your Stuartial tidings.

Again and again farewell: and pray be mindful of me.

Coleridge's "Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni," was printed in the *Morning Post* for September 11, 1802. The poem contains this passage:—

> God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
> Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
> God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
> Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
> And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
> And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Canon Ainger suggests that by Tod, the unlucky doctor, Lamb meant Dr. William Dodd (1729-1777), the compiler of the *Beauties of Shakespeare* and the forger, who was hanged at Tyburn.

"Your comparisons." Coleridge's "Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome under Julius and Augustus Cæsar" was printed in the *Morning Post*, September 21, September 25 and October 2, 1802. See *Essays on His Own Times*, 1850, Vol. III., page 478.

Wordsworth's marriage to Mary Hutchinson, on October 4, 1802, had called forth from Coleridge his ode on "Dejection," printed in the *Morning Post* for the same day, in which Wordsworth was addressed as Edmund. In later editions Coleridge suppressed its personal character.

Ludus is Lloyd. Lamb means by "American" what we should mean by pro-American. Compare Lady Sarah Lennox (*Letters*, I., 277.)

The flying opossum (shortened to Pi-pos) was a name for little Derwent Coleridge, then two years old. It arose from his inability to pronounce the words "flying opossum" under a picture in one of his books.

"Stuartial." Referring to Daniel Stuart of the *Morning Post*.]

LETTER 98

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 11th, 1802.

DEAR Coleridge,—Your offer about the German poems is exceedingly kind; but I do not think it a wise speculation, because the time it would take you to put them into prose would be nearly as great as if you versified them. Indeed, I am sure you could do the one nearly as soon as the other; so that, instead of a division of labour, it would be only a multiplication. But I will think of your offer in another light. I dare say I could find many things of a light nature to suit that paper, which you would not object to pass upon Stuart as your own, and I should come in for some light profits, and Stuart think the more highly of your assiduity. "Bishop Hall's Characters" I know nothing about, having never seen them. But I will reconsider your offer, which is very plausible; for as to the drudgery of going every day to an editor with my scraps, like a pedlar, for him to pick out, and tumble about my ribbons and posies, and to wait in his lobby, &c., no money could make up for the degradation. You are in too high request with him to have anything unpleasant of that sort to submit to.

It was quite a slip of my pen, in my Latin letter, when I told you I had Milton's Latin Works. I ought to have said his Prose Works, in two volumes, Birch's edition, containing all, both Latin and English, a fuller and better edition than Lloyd's of Toland. It is completely at your service, and you must accept it from me; at the same time, I shall be much obliged to you for your Latin Milton, which you think you have at Howitt's; it will leave me nothing to wish for but the "History of England," which I shall soon pick up for a trifle. But you must write me word whether the Miltons are worth paying carriage for. You have a Milton; but it is pleasanter to eat one's own peas out of one's own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent Garden; and a book reads the better, which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots and dog's-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins,

or over a pipe, which I think is the maximum. But, Coleridge, you must accept these little things, and not think of returning money for them, for I do not set up for a factor or general agent. As for the fantastic debt of 15*l.*, I'll think you were dreaming, and not trouble myself seriously to attend to you. My bad Latin you properly correct; but *natales* for *nates* was an inadvertency: I knew better. *Progrediri* or *progredi* I thought indifferent, my authority being Ainsworth. However, as I have got a fit of Latin, you will now and then indulge me with an *epistola*. I pay the postage of this, and propose doing it by turns. In that case I can now and then write to you without remorse; not that you would mind the money, but you have not always ready cash to answer small demands—the *epistolarii nummi*.

Your "Epigram on the Sun and Moon in Germany" is admirable. Take 'em all together, they are as good as Harrington's. I will muster up all the conceits I can, and you shall have a packet some day. You and I together can answer all demands surely: you, mounted on a terrible charger (like Homer in the Battle of the Books) at the head of the cavalry: I will lead the light horse. I have just heard from Stoddart. Allen and he intend taking Keswick in their way home. Allen wished particularly to have it a secret that he is in Scotland, and wrote to me accordingly very urgently. As luck was, I had told not above three or four; but Mary had told Mrs. Green of Christ's Hospital! For the present, farewell: never forgetting love to Pi-pos and his friends.

C. Lamb.

Note

[Coleridge, who seems to have been asked by Stuart of the *Morning Post* for translations of German verse, had suggested, I presume, that he should supply Lamb (who knew no German) with literal prose translations, and that Lamb should versify them, as he had in the case of "Thekla's Song" in Coleridge's translation of the first part of *Wallenstein* nearly three years before. Lamb's suggestion is that he should send to Stuart epigrams and paragraphs in Coleridge's name. Whether or not he did so, I cannot say.

Bishop Hall's *Characters of Vices and Virtues* was published in 1608. Coleridge may have suggested that Lamb should imitate them for the *Morning Post*. Lamb later came to know Hall's satires, for he quotes from them in his review of Barron Field's poems in 1820.

Milton's prose works were edited by Thomas Birch, and by John Toland in folio.

"My bad Latin"—in the letter of October 9, 1802. Ainsworth

was Robert Ainsworth, compiler of the *Thesaurus Linguæ Latinæ*, 1736, for many years the best Latin dictionary.

"Your Epigram"—Coleridge's Epigram "On the Curious Circumstance that in the German Language the Sun is feminine and the Moon masculine." It appeared in the *Morning Post* on October 11, 1802. Coleridge had been sending epigrams and other verse to the *Post* for some time. Harrington would be Sir John Harington (1561-1612), the author of many epigrams.

"Like Homer." In Swift's satire Homer appeared at the "Head of the Cavalry, mounted on a furious Horse, with Difficulty managed by the Rider himself, but which no other Mortal durst approach."

Stoddart and Allen we have met. I do not know anything of Mrs. Green.]

LETTER 99

(*Fragment*)[1]

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 23rd, 1802.

I READ daily your political essays. I was particularly pleased with "Once a Jacobin:" though the argument is obvious enough, the style was less swelling than your things sometimes are, and it was plausible *ad populum*. A vessel has just arrived from Jamaica with the news of poor Sam Le Grice's death. He died at Jamaica of the yellow fever. His course was rapid and he had been very foolish; but I believe there was more of kindness and warmth in him than in almost any other of our schoolfellows. The annual meeting of the Blues is to-morrow, at the London Tavern, where poor Sammy dined with them two years ago, and attracted the notice of all by the singular foppishness of his dress. When men go off the stage so early, it scarce seems a noticeable thing in their epitaphs, whether they had been wise or silly in their lifetime.

I am glad the snuff and Pi-pos's Books please. "Goody Two Shoes" is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery's hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B.'s and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. B.'s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the

[1] See Appendix II., page 968.

shape of *knowledge*, and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt that a Horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a Horse, and such like; instead of that beautiful Interest in wild tales which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history?

Damn them!—I mean the cursed Barbauld Crew, those Blights and Blasts of all that is Human in man and child.

As to the Translations, let me do two or three hundred lines, and then do you try the Nostrums upon Stuart in any way you please. If they go down I will bray more. In fact, if I got or could but get 50*l.* a year only, in addition to what I have, I should live in affluence.

Have you anticipated it, or could not you give a Parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell, particularly as to the contrast in their deeds affecting *foreign* states? Cromwell's interference for the Albigenses, B[uonaparte]'s against the Swiss. Then Religion would come in; and Milton and you could rant about our countrymen of that period. This is a hasty suggestion, the more hasty because I want my Supper. I have just finished Chapman's Homer. Did you ever read it?—it has most the continuous power of interesting you all along, like a rapid original, of any, and in the uncommon excellence of the more finished parts goes beyond Fairfax or any of 'em. The metre is fourteen syllables, and capable of all sweetness and grandeur. Cowper's damn'd blank verse detains you every step with some heavy Miltonism; Chapman gallops off with you his own free pace. Take a simile for an example. The council breaks up—

> "Being abroad, the earth was overlaid
> With flockers to them, that came forth; as when of frequent bees
> Swarms rise out of a hollow rock, repairing the degrees
> *Of their egression endlessly, with ever rising new*
> From forth their sweet nest; as their store, still as it faded, grew,
> *And never would cease sending forth her clusters to the spring,*
> They still crowd out so: this flock here, that there, belabouring
> The loaded flowers. So," &c. &c.
>
> [*Iliad*, Book II., 70-77.]

What *endless egression of phrases* the dog commands!

Take another: Agamemnon wounded, bearing his wound heroically for the sake of the army (look below) to a woman in labour.

"He, with his lance, sword, mighty stones, poured his heroic wreak
On other squadrons of the foe, whiles yet warm blood did break
Thro' his cleft veins: but when the wound was quite exhaust and crude,
The eager anguish did approve his princely fortitude.
As when most sharp and bitter pangs distract a labouring dame,
Which the divine Ilithiæ, that rule the painful frame
Of human childbirth, pour on her; the Ilithiæ that are
The daughters of Saturnia; with whose extreme repair
The woman in her travail strives to take the worst it gives;
With thought, it *must be, 'tis love's fruit, the end for which she lives; The mean to make herself new born, what comforts* will redound:
So," &c.

[*Iliad*, Book XI., 228-239.]

I will tell you more about Chapman and his peculiarities in my next. I am much interested in him.

Yours ever affectionately, and Pi-Pos's. C. L.

NOTE

[Coleridge was just now contributing political essays as well as verse to the *Morning Post*. "Once a Jacobin always a Jacobin" appeared on October 21, 1802. These were afterwards reprinted in *Essays on His Own Times*. *Ad populum* is a reminder of Coleridge's first political essays, the *Concliones ad Populum* of 1795.

"*Goody Two Shoes*"—One of Newbery's most famous books for children, sometimes attributed to Goldsmith, though, I think, wrongly.

Mrs. Barbauld (1743-1825) was the author of *Hymns in Prose for Children*, and she contributed to her brother John Aikin's *Evenings at Home*, both very popular books. Lamb, who afterwards came to know Mrs. Barbauld, described her and Mrs. Inchbald as the two bald women. Mrs. Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810) was the author of many books for children; she lives by the *Story of the Robins*.

The translation for Stuart either was not made or not accepted; nor did Coleridge carry out the project of the parallel of Buonaparte with Cromwell. Hallam, however, did so in his *Constitutional History of England*, unfavourably to Cromwell.

George Chapman's *Odyssey* was paraphrased by Lamb in his *Adventures of Ulysses*, 1808 (see the letter to Elton on page 650). Lamb either did not return to the subject with Coleridge, or his "next letter" has been lost.]

LETTER 100

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 4th, 1802.

OBSERVE, there comes to you, by the Kendal waggon to-morrow, the illustrious 5th of November, a box, containing the Miltons, the strange American Bible, with White's brief note, to which you will attend; Baxter's "Holy Commonwealth," for which you stand indebted to me 3s. 6d.; an odd volume of Montaigne, being of no use to me, I having the whole; certain books belonging to Wordsworth, as do also the strange thick-hoofed shoes, which are very much admired at in London. All these sundries I commend to your most strenuous looking after. If you find the Miltons in certain parts dirtied and soiled with a crumb of right Gloucester blacked in the candle (my usual supper), or peradventure a stray ash of tobacco wafted into the crevices, look to that passage more especially: depend upon it, it contains good matter. I have got your little Milton which, as it contains Salmasius—and I make a rule of never hearing but one side of the question (why should I distract myself?)—I shall return to you when I pick up the *Latina opera*. The first Defence is the greatest work among them, because it is uniformly great, and such as is befitting the very mouth of a great nation speaking for itself. But the second Defence, which is but a succession of splendid episodes slightly tied together, has one passage which if you have not read, I conjure you to lose no time, but read it; it is his consolations in his blindness, which had been made a reproach to him. It begins whimsically, with poetical flourishes about Tiresias and other blind worthies (which still are mainly interesting as displaying his singular mind, and in what degree poetry entered into his daily soul, not by fits and impulses, but engrained and innate); but the concluding page, *i.e.* of *this passage* (not of the *Defensio*) which you will easily find, divested of all brags and flourishes, gives so rational, so true an enumeration of his comforts, so human, that it cannnot be read without the deepest interest. Take one touch of the religious part:—"Et sane haud ultima Dei cura cæci—(*we blind folks*, I understand it not *nos* for *ego*;)—sumus; qui nos, quominus quicquam aliud præter ipsum cernere valemus, eo clementius atque benignius respicere dignatur. Væ qui illudit nos, væ qui lædit, execratione publica devovendo; nos ab injuriis hominum non modo incolumes, sed pene sacros divina lex reddidit, divinus favor: nec tam *oculorum hebetudine* quam *cœlestium alarum umbrâ* has nobis fecisse tenebras

videtur, factas illustrare rursus interiore ac longe præstabiliore lumine haud raro solet. Huc refero, quod et amici officiosius nunc etiam quam solebant, colunt, observant, adsunt; quod et nonnulli sunt, quibuscum Pyladeas atque Theseas alternare voces verorum amicorum liceat.

> "Vade gubernaculum mei pedis.
> Da manum ministro amico.
> Da collo manum tuam, ductor autem viæ ero tibi ego."

All this, and much more, is highly pleasing to know. But you may easily find it;—and I don't know why I put down so many words about it, but for the pleasure of writing to you and the want of another topic.

Yours ever, C. Lamb.

To-morrow I expect with anxiety S. T. C.'s letter to Mr. Fox.

Note

[Lamb refers to Milton's *Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano contra Alexandrum Morum Ecclesiasten.* The following is a translation of the Latin passage by Robert Fellowes:—

> And indeed, in my blindness, I enjoy in no inconsiderable degree the favour of the Deity; who regards me with more tenderness and compassion in proportion as I am able to behold nothing but himself. Alas! for him who insults me, who maligns and merits public execration! For the divine law not only shields me from injury, but almost renders me too sacred to attack; not indeed so much from the privation of my sight, as from the overshadowing of those heavenly wings, which seem to have occasioned this obscurity; and which, when occasioned, he is wont to illuminate with an interior light, more precious and more pure. To this I ascribe the more tender assiduities of my friends, their soothing attentions, their kind visits, their reverential observances; among whom there are some with whom I may interchange the Pyladean and Thesean dialogue of inseparable friends.
>
> *Orest.* Proceed, and be rudder of my feet, by showing me the most endearing love. [Eurip. in *Orest.*
>
> And in another place—
>
> "Lend your hand to your devoted friend,
> Throw your arm round my neck, and
> I will conduct you on the way."

Coleridge's first letter to Charles James Fox was printed in the *Morning Post* for November 4, 1802, his second on November 9.]

LETTER 101

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[November, 1802.]

MY dear Manning,—I must positively write, or I shall miss you at Toulouse. I sit here like a decayed minute hand (I lie; *that* does not *sit*), and being myself the exponent of no

time, take no heed how the clocks about me are going. You possibly by this time may have explored all Italy, and toppled, unawares, into Etna, while you went too near those rotten-jawed, gap-toothed, old worn-out chaps of hell,—while I am meditating a quiescent letter to the honest postmaster at Toulouse. But in case you should not have been *felo de se*, this is to tell you, that your letter was quite to my palate—in particular your just remarks upon Industry, damned Industry (though indeed you left me to explore the reason), were highly relishing.

I've often wished I lived in the Golden Age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers, and roused themselves at their leisure, —the genius there is in a man's natural idle face, that has not learned his multiplication table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world! *Now*, as Joseph Cottle, a Bard of Nature, sings, going up Malvern Hills,

> "How steep! how painful the ascent!
> It needs the evidence of *close deduction*
> To know that ever I shall gain the top."

You must know that Joe is lame, so that he had some reason for so singing. These two lines, I assure you, are taken *totidem literis* from a very *popular* poem. Joe is also an Epic Poet as well as a Descriptive, and has written a tragedy, though both his drama and epopoiea are strictly *descriptive*, and chiefly of the *Beauties of Nature*, for Joe thinks *man* with all his passions and frailties not a proper subject of the *Drama*. Joe's tragedy hath the following surpassing speech in it. Some king is told that his enemy has engaged twelve archers to come over in a boat from an enemy's country and way-lay him; he thereupon pathetically exclaims—

> "*Twelve*, dost thou say? Where be those dozen villains!"

Cottle read two or three acts out to us, very gravely on both sides, till he came to this heroic touch,—and then he asked what we laughed at? I had no more muscles that day. A poet that chooses to read out his own verses has but a limited power over you. There is a bound where his authority ceases.

Apropos: if you should go to Florence or to Rome, inquire what works are extant in gold, silver, bronze, or marble, of Benvenuto Cellini, a Florentine artist, whose Life doubtless, you have read; or, if not, without controversy you must read: so hark ye, send for it immediately from Lane's circulating library. It is always put among the romances, very properly; but you have read it, I suppose. In particular, inquire at Florence for his colossal bronze statue (in the grand square or somewhere) of Perseus. You may read the story in Tooke's "Pantheon." Nothing material has

transpired in these parts. Coleridge has indited a violent philippic against Mr. Fox in the "Morning Post," which is a compound of expressions of humility, gentlemen-ushering-in most arrogant charges. It will do Mr. Fox no real injury among those that know him.

NOTE

[Manning's letter of September 10 had told Lamb he was on his way to Toulouse.

Cottle's epic was *Alfred*. The quoted lines were added in the twelfth edition. He had also written *John the Baptist*.

"Cellini's Life." Lamb would probably have read the translation by Nugent, 1771. Cellini's Perseus in bronze is in the Loggia de' Lanzi at Florence.]

LETTER 102

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: Feb. 19th, 1803.]

MY dear Manning,—The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of "Independent Tartary." What have you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John?

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon't they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They'll certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Maundevil's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favorable specimen of his Countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *Independence?* That was a clever way of the old puritans—pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish

stories about Cambuscan and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there's no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention;* but if there were such *darling* things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the Horse of Brass, and frisk off for Prester John's Country. But these are all tales; a Horse of Brass never flew, and a King's daughter never talked with Birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take Hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip.* Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they're nothing but lies): only now and then a Romance, to keep the fancy *under.* Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts. That has been your ruin.* Accustom yourself to write familiar letters on common subjects to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. There's your friend Holcroft now, has written a play. You used to be fond of the drama. Nobody went to see it. Notwithstanding this, with an audacity perfectly original, he faces the town down in a preface, that they *did like* it very much. I have heard a waspish punster say, "Sir, why did you not laugh at my jest?" But for a man boldly to face me out with, "Sir, I maintain it, you did laugh at my jest," is a little too much. I have seen H. but once. He spoke of you to me in honorable terms. H. seems to me to be drearily dull. Godwin is dull, but then he has a dash of affectation, which smacks of the coxcomb, and your coxcombs are always agreeable. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a Pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the Gentleman.* Rickman is a man "absolute in all numbers." I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. But if you do go among [them] pray contrive to *stink* as soon as you can that you may [? not] hang a [? on] hand at the Butcher's. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out for 5d. a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some Minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

Your sincere fr^d^, C. LAMB.

19th Feb., 1803, London.

NOTE

[Manning's letter producing this reply is endorsed by Lamb, "Received February 19, 1803," so that he lost no time. Manning wrote: "I am actually thinking of Independent Tartary as I write this, but you go out and skate—you go out and walk some times? Very true, that's a distraction—but the moment I set myself down quietly to any-thing, in comes Independent Tartary—for example I attend chemical lectures but every drug that Mr. Vauquelin presents to me tastes of Cream of Tartar—in short I am become good for nothing for a time, and as I said before, I should not have written now, but to assure you of my friendly and affectionate remembrance, but as you are not in the same unhappy circumstances, I expect you'll write to me and not measure page for page. This is the first letter I have begun for England for three months except one I sent to my Father yesterday." Manning returned to London before leaving for China. He did not sail until 1806.

Prester John, the name given by old writers to the King of Ethiopia in Abyssinia. A corruption of Belul Gian, precious stone; in Latin first Johanus preciosus, then Presbyter Johannes and then Prester John. In Sir John Mandeville's *Voiage and Travails*, 1356, Prester John is said to be a lineal descendant of Ogier the Dane.—"Is the chair empty?" see "Richard III.," IV., 4, 470. —Hartley would be David Hartley, the metaphysician, after whom Coleridge's son was named.—The reader must go to Chaucer's "Squire's Tale" for Cambuscan, King of Sarra, in Tartary; his horse of brass which conveyed him in a day wherever he would go; and the ring which enabled his daughter Canacé to understand the language of birds.

Holcroft's play was "A Tale of Mystery."

Rickman had returned from Ireland some months previously. The merry natural captain was James Burney (1750-1821), with whom the Lambs soon became very friendly. He was the centre of their whist-playing circle. Burney, who was brother of Madame D'Arblay, had sailed with Captain Cook.

"Absolute in all numbers." In the address to readers prefixed to the first folio of Shakespeare is the phrase "Absolute in their numbers."

"The reverse of fishes in Holland." An allusion to Andrew Marvell's whimsical satire against the Dutch:—

> The fish ofttimes the burgher dispossessed
> And sat not as a meat but as a guest.

"Why not your father?" Manning's father was the Rev. William Manning, rector of Diss, in Norfolk, who died in 1810.]

LETTER 103

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

March, 1803.

DEAR Manning, I send you some verses I have made on the death of a young Quaker you may have heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville, though I had never spoken to her in my life. She died about a month since. If you have interest with the Abbé de Lisle, you may get 'em translated: he has done as much for the Georgics.

HESTER

When maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try,
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
That flush'd her spirit.

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call:—if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was train'd in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet forewarning?

NOTE

[This letter is possibly only a fragment. I have supplied "Hester" from the 1818 text.

The young Quaker was Hester Savory, the daughter of Joseph Savory, a goldsmith of the Strand. She was married July 1, 1802, and died a few months after. In Vol. V. of the present edition her portrait will be found.

"The Abbé de Lisle." L'Abbé Jacques Delille (1738-1813) known by his *Géorgiques*, 1770, a translation into French of Virgil's *Georgics*.]

LETTER 104

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: March 5, 1803.]

DEAR Wordsworth, having a Guinea of your sister's left in hand, after all your commissions, and as it does not seem likely that you will trouble us, as the phrase is, for some time to come, I send you a pound note, and with it the best things in the verse way I have lit upon for many a day. I believe they will be new to you. You know Cotton, who wrote a 2d part to Walton's Angler. A volume of his miscellaneous poems is scarce. Take what follows from a poem call'd Winter. I omit 20 verses, in which a storm is described, to hasten to the best:—

21

Louder, and louder, still they[1] come,
Nile's Cataracts to these are dumb,
The Cyclops to these Blades are still,
Whose anvils shake the burning hill.

22

Were all the stars-enlighten'd skies
As full of ears, as sparkling eyes,
This rattle in the crystal hall
Would be enough to deaf them all.

23

What monstrous Race is hither tost,
Thus to alarm our British Coast,
With outcries such as never yet
War, or confusion, could beget?

24

Oh! now I know them, let us home,
Our mortal Enemy is come,
Winter, and all his blustring train
Have made a voyage o'er the main.

[1] The winds.

27

With bleak, and with congealing winds,
The earth in shining chain he binds;
And still as he doth further pass,
Quarries his way with liquid glass.

28

Hark! how the Blusterers of the Bear
Their gibbous Cheeks in triumph bear,
And with continued shouts do ring
The entry of their palsied king!

29

The squadron, nearest to your eye,
Is his forlorn of Infantry,
Bowmen of unrelenting minds,
Whose shafts are feather'd with the winds.

30

Now you may see his vanguard rise
Above the earthy precipice,
Bold Horse, on bleakest mountains bred,
With hail, instead of provend, fed.

31

Their lances are the pointed locks,
Torn from the brows of frozen rocks,
Their shields are chrystal as their swords,
The steel the rusted rock affords.

32

See, the Main Body now appears!
And hark! th' Æolian Trumpeters.
By their hoarse levets do declare,
That the bold General rides there.

33

And look where mantled up in white
He sleds it, like the Muscovite.
I know him by the port he bears,
And his lifeguard of mountaineers.

34

Their caps are furr'd with hoary frosts,
The bravery their cold kingdom boasts;
Their spungy plads are milk-white frieze,
Spun from the snowy mountain's fleece.

35

Their partizans are fine carv'd glass,
Fring'd with the morning's spangled grass;
And pendant by their brawny thighs
Hang cimetars of burnish'd ice.

38

Fly, fly, the foe advances fast,
Into our fortress let us haste,
Where all the roarers of the north
Can neither storm, nor starve, us forth.

39

There under ground a magazine
Of sovran juice is cellar'd in,
Liquor that will the siege maintain,
Should Phœbus ne'er return again.

40

'Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
And thaws the gelly'd blood of age,
Matures the young, restores the old,
And makes the fainting coward bold.

41

It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our live's misfortunes sweet,
And Venus frolic in the sheet.

42

Then let the chill Scirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar.

43

Whilst we together jovial sit,
Careless, and crown'd with mirth and wit,
Where tho' bleak winds confine us home,
Our fancies thro' the world shall roam.

44

We'll think of all the friends we know,
And drink to all, worth drinking to;
When, having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want health than wine!

45

But, where friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our Charity.
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty bumpers thrive.

46

We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
And those that languish into health,
Th' afflicted into joy, th' opprest
Into security & rest.

47

The worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lye,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

48

The brave shall triumph in success,
The lovers shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded virtue praise,
And the neglected Poet bays.

49
Thus shall our healths do others good,
While we ourselves do all we wou'd,
For freed from envy, and from care,
What would we be, but what we are?

50
'Tis the plump Grape's immortal juice,
That does this happiness produce,
And will preserve us free together,
Maugre mischance, or wind, & weather.

51
Then let old winter take his course,
And roar abroad till he be hoarse,
And his lungs crack with ruthless ire,
It shall but serve to blow our fire.

52
Let him our little castle ply
With all his loud artillery,
Whilst sack and claret man the fort,
His fury shall become our sport.

53
Or let him Scotland take, and there
Confine the plotting Presbyter;
His zeal may freeze, whilst we kept warm
With love and wine can know no harm.

How could Burns miss the series of lines from 42 to 49?

There is also a long poem from the Latin on the inconveniences of old age. I can't set down the whole, tho' right worthy, having dedicated the remainder of my sheet to something else. I just excerp here and there, to convince you, if after this you need it, that Cotton was a first rate. Tis old Gallus speaks of himself, once the delight of the Ladies and Gallants of Rome:—

The beauty of my shape & face are fled,
And my revolted form bespeaks me dead,
For fair, and shining age, has now put on
A bloodless, funeral complexion.
My skin's dry'd up, my nerves unpliant are,
And my poor limbs my nails plow up and tear.
My chearful eyes now with a constant spring
Of tears bewail their own sad suffering;
And those soft lids, that once secured my eye
Now rude, and bristled grown, do drooping lie,
Bolting mine eyes, as in a gloomy cave,
Which there on furies, and grim objects, rave.
'Twould fright the full-blown Gallant to behold
The dying object of a man so old.
And can you think, that once a man he was,
Of human reason who no portion has.
The letters split, when I consult my book,
And every leaf I turn does broader look.
In darkness do I dream I see the light,
When light is darkness to my periahd sight.
* * * * * * * * *

Is it not hard we may not from men's eyes
Cloak and conceal Age's indecencies.
Unseeming spruceness th' old man discommends,
And in old men, only to live, offends.
* * * * * * * * *

How can I him a living man believe,
Whom light, and air, by whom he panteth, grieve;
The gentle sleeps, which other mortals ease,
Scarce in a winter's night my eyelids seize.
* * * * * * * * *

The boys, and girls, deride me now forlorn,
And but to call me, Sir, now think it scorn,
They jeer my countnance, and my feeble pace,
And scoff that nodding head, that awful was.
* * * * * * * * *

A song written by Cowper, which in stile is much above his usual, and emulates in noble plainness any old balad I have seen. Hayley has just published it &c. with a Life. I did not think Cowper *up* to it:—

SONG

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

1

Toll for the Brave!
The Brave, that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore.—

2

Eight hundred of the Brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

3

A Land breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was over set;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her sails complete.

4

Toll for the Brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone:
His last sea-fight is fought;
His work of glory done.

5

It was not in the battle,
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock.

6

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down,
With twice four hundred men.

7
Weigh the vessel up!
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with the cup
The tear that England owes.

8
Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again,
Full charg'd with England's thunder,
And plow the distant main.

9
But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er;
And he, and his eight hundred,
Shall plow the wave no more.

In your obscure part of the world, which I take to be Ultima Thule, I thought these verses out of Books which cannot be accessible would not be unwelcome. Having room, I will put in an Epitaph I writ for a *real occasion*, a year or two back.

ON MARY DRUIT WHO DIED AGED 19

Under this cold marble stone
Sleep the sad remains of One,
Who, when alive, by few or none

2
Was lov'd, as lov'd she might have been,
If she prosp'rous days had seen,
Or had thriving been, I ween.

3
Only this cold funeral stone
Tells, she was belov'd by One,
Who on the marble graves his moan.

I conclude with Love to your Sister and Mrs. W.

Yours affectly,

C. LAMB.

Mary sends Love, &c.

5th March, 1803.

On consulting Mary, I find it will be foolish inserting the Note as I intended, being so small, and as it is possible you *may* have to *trouble* us again e'er long; so it shall remain to be settled hereafter. However, the verses shan't be lost.

N.B.—All orders executed with fidelity and punctuality by C. & M. Lamb.

[*On the outside is written:*] I beg to open this for a minute to add my remembrances to you all, and to assure you I shall ever be

happy to hear from or see, much more to be useful to any of my old friends at Grasmere.

J. Stoddart.

A *lean* paragraph of the Doctor's.

C. Lamb.

Note

[Charles Cotton (1630-1687). Wordsworth praises the poem on Winter in his preface to the 1815 edition of his works, and elsewhere sets up a comparison between the character of Cotton and that of Burns.

Hayley's *Life of Cowper* appeared first in 1803.

Lamb's epitaph was written at the request of Rickman. See also the letter to Manning of April (or thereabouts), 1802, page 241. Rickman seems to have supplied Lamb with a prose epitaph and asked for a poetical version. Canon Ainger prints what I take to be an earlier version from an unpublished letter to Rickman, dated February 1, 1802. Lamb printed the epitaph in the *Morning Post* for February 7, 1804, over his initials (see Vol. V. of this edition, pages 80 and 322). Mary Druit, or Druitt, lived at Wimborne, and according to John Payne Collier, in *An Old Man's Diary*, died of small-pox at the age of nineteen. He says that Lamb's lines were cut on her tomb, but correspondence in *Notes and Queries* has proved this to be incorrect.

"The Doctor." Stoddart, having taken his D.C.L. in 1801, was now called Dr. Stoddart.

Soon after this letter Mary Lamb was taken ill again.]

LETTER 105

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

April 13th, 1803.

MY dear Coleridge,—Things have gone on better with me since you left me. I expect to have my old housekeeper home again in a week or two. She has mended most rapidly. My health too has been better since you took away that Montero cap. I have left off cayenned eggs and such bolsters to discomfort. There was death in that cap. I mischievously wished that by some inauspicious jolt the whole contents might be shaken, and the coach set on fire. For you said they had that property. How the old Gentleman, who joined you at Grantham, would have clappt his hands to his knees, and not knowing but it was an immediate visitation of God that burnt him, how pious it would have made

him; him, I mean, that brought the Influenza with him, and only took places for one—a damn'd old sinner, he must have known what he had got with him! However, I wish the cap no harm for the sake of the *head it fits*, and could be content to see it disfigure my healthy sideboard again. [*Here is a paragraph erased.*]

What do you think of smoking? I want your sober, *average noon opinion* of it. I generally am eating my dinner about the time I should determine it. [*Another small erasure.*]

Morning is a Girl, and can't smoke—she's no evidence one way or other; and Night is so evidently *bought over*, that *he* can't be a very upright Judge. May be the truth is, that *one* pipe is wholesome, *two* pipes toothsome, *three* pipes noisome, *four* pipes fulsome, *five* pipes quarrelsome; and that's the *sum* on't. But that is deciding rather upon rhyme than reason. . . . After all, our instincts *may* be best. Wine, I am sure, good, mellow, generous Port, can hurt nobody, unless they take it to excess, which they may easily avoid if they observe the rules of temperance.

Bless you, old Sophist, who next to Human Nature taught me all the corruption I was capable of knowing—And bless your Montero Cap, and your trail (which shall come after you whenever you appoint), and your wife and children—Pi pos especially.

When shall we two smoke again? Last night I had been in a sad quandary of spirits, in what they call the evening; but a pipe and some generous Port, and King Lear (being alone), had its effects as a remonstrance. I went to bed pot-valiant. By the way, may not the Ogles of Somersetshire be remotely descended from King Lear?

Love to Sara, and ask her what gown she means that Mary has got of hers. I know of none but what went with Miss Wordsworth's things to Wordsworth, and was paid for out of their money. I allude to a part which I may have read imperfectly in a letter of hers to you. C. L.

NOTE

[Coleridge had been in London early in April and had stayed with Lamb in the Temple. From his letter to his wife, dated April 4, we get light on Lamb's allusion to his "old housekeeper," *i.e.*, Mary Lamb, and her rapid mending:—

I had purposed not to speak of Mary Lamb, but I had better write it than tell it. The Thursday before last she met at Rickman's a Mr. Babb, an old friend and admirer of her mother. The next day she *smiled* in an ominous way; on Sunday she told her brother that she was getting bad, with great agony. On Tuesday morning she laid hold of me with violent agitation and talked wildly about George Dyer. I told Charles there was not a moment to lose; and I did not lose a moment, but went for a hackney-coach and took her to the private mad-house at Hugsden. She was quite calm, and said it was the best to do so. But she wept bitterly two or three times, yet all in a calm way. Charles is cut to the heart,

Lamb's first articulate doubts as to smoking are expressed in this letter. One may perhaps take in this connection the passage on tobacco and alcohol in the "Confessions of a Drunkard" (see Vol. I., page 135).

"Montero cap"—a recollection of *Tristram Shandy*.

The Ogles and King Lear—merely a pun.]

LETTER 106

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date. May, 1803.]

Mary sends love from home.

DC.,—I do confess that I have not sent your books as I ought to be [have] done; but you know how the human freewill is tethered, and that we perform promises to ourselves no better than to our friends. A watch is come for you. Do you want it soon, or shall I wait till some one travels your way? You, like me, I suppose, reckon the lapse of time from the waste thereof, as boys let a cock run to waste: too idle to stop it, and rather amused with seeing it dribble. Your poems have begun printing; Longman sent to me to arrange them, the old and the new together. It seems you have left it to him. So I classed them, as nearly as I could, according to dates. First, after the Dedication, (which must march first) and which I have transplanted from before the Preface (which stood like a dead wall of prose between) to be the first poem—then comes "The Pixies," and the things most juvenile—then on "To Chatterton," &c.—on, lastly, to the "Ode on the Departing Year," and "Musings,"—which finish. Longman wanted the Ode first; but the arrangement I have made is precisely that marked out in the dedication, following the order of time. I told Longman I was sure that you would omit a good portion of the first edition. I instanced in several sonnets, &c.—but that was not his plan, and, as you have done nothing in it, all I could do was to arrange 'em on the supposition that all were to be retained. A few I positively rejected; such as that of "The Thimble," and that of "Flicker and Flicker's wife," and that *not* in the manner of Spenser, which you yourself had stigmatised—and the "Man of Ross,"—I doubt whether I should this last. It is not too late to save it. The first proof is only just come. I have been forced to call that Cupid's Elixir "Kisses." It stands in your first volume as an Effusion, so that, instead of prefixing The Kiss to that of "One Kiss, dear Maid," &c., I have ventured

to entitle it "To Sara." I am aware of the nicety of changing even so mere a trifle as a title to so short a piece, and subverting old associations; but two called "Kisses" would have been absolutely ludicrous, and "Effusion" is no name; and these poems come close together. I promise you not to alter one word in any poem whatever, but to take your last text, where two are. Can you send any wishes about the book? Longman, I think, should have settled with you. But it seems you have left it to him. Write as soon as you possibly can; for, without making myself responsible, I feel myself in some sort accessory to the selection which I am to proof-correct. But I decidedly said to Biggs that I was sure you would omit more. Those I have positively rubbed off I can swear to *individually*, (except the "Man of Ross," which is too familiar in Pope,) but no others—you have your cue. For my part, I had rather all the *Juvenilia* were kept—*memoriæ causâ*.

Rob Lloyd has written me a masterly letter, containing a character of his father;—see, how different from Charles he views the old man! *Literatim* "My father smokes, repeats Homer in Greek, and Virgil, and is learning, when from business, with all the vigour of a young man Italian. He is really a wonderful man. He mixes public and private business, the intricacies of discording life with his religion and devotion. No one more rationally enjoys the romantic scenes of nature, and the chit-chat and little vagaries of his children; and, though surrounded with an ocean of affairs, the very neatness of his most obscure cupboard in the house passes not unnoticed. I never knew any one view with such clearness, nor so well satisfied with things as they are, and make such allowance for things which must appear perfect Syriac to him." By the last he means the Lloydisms of the younger branches. His portrait of Charles (exact as far as he has had opportunities of noting him) is most exquisite. "Charles is become steady as a church, and as straightforward as a Roman road. It would distract him to mention anything that was not as plain as sense; he seems to have run the whole scenery of life, AND NOW RESTS AS THE FORMAL PRECISIAN OF NON-EXISTENCE." Here is genius I think, and 'tis seldom a young man, a Lloyd, looks at a father (so differing) with such good nature while he is alive. Write—

I am in post-haste, C. LAMB.

Love, &c., to Sara, P., and H.

NOTE

[The date is usually given as March 20, but is May 20; certainly after Coleridge's visit to town (see preceding letter).

Poems, by S. T. Coleridge, third edition, was now in preparation by Longman & Rees. Lamb saw the volume through the press. The 1797 second edition was followed, except that Lloyd's and Lamb's contributions were omitted, together with the following poems by Coleridge: "To the Rev. W. J. H.," "Sonnet to Koskiusko," "Written after a Walk" (which Lamb inaccurately called "Flicker and Flicker's Wife"), "From a Young Lady" ("The Silver Thimble"), "On the Christening of a Friend's Child," "Introductory Sonnet to Lloyd's 'Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer.'" "The Man of Ross" (whom Pope also celebrates in the *Moral Essays*, III., lines 250-290) was retained, and also the "Lines in the Manner of Spenser." The piece rechristened "Kisses" had been called "The Composition of a Kiss." Biggs was the printer. See also the next letter.

Of Robert Lloyd's father we hear more later (see page 402).]

LETTER 107

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

27th May, 1803.

MY dear Coleridge,—The date of my last was one day prior to the receipt of your letter, full of foul omens. I explain, lest you should have thought mine too light a reply to such sad matter. I seriously hope by this time you have given up all thoughts of journeying to the green islands of the Blest—voyages in time of war are very precarious—or at least, that you will take them in your way to the Azores. Pray be careful of this letter till it has done its duty, for it is to inform you that I have booked off your watch (laid in cotton like an untimely fruit), and with it Condillac and all other books of yours which were left here. These will set out on Monday next, the 29th May, by Kendal waggon, from White Horse, Cripplegate. You will make seasonable inquiries, for a watch mayn't come your way again in a hurry. I have been repeatedly after Tobin, and now hear that he is in the country, not to return till middle of June. I will take care and see him with the earliest. But cannot you write pathetically to him, enforcing a speedy mission of your books for literary purposes? He is too good a retainer to Literature, to let her interests suffer through his default. And why, in the name of Beelzebub, are your books to travel from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, and then circuitously to Cripplegate, when their business is to take a short cut down Holborn-hill, up Snow do., on to Wood-street,

&c.? The former mode seems a sad superstitious subdivision of labour. Well! the "Man of Ross" is to stand; Longman begs for it; the printer stands with a wet sheet in one hand and a useless Pica in the other, in tears, pleading for it; I relent. Besides, it was a Salutation poem, and has the mark of the beast "Tobacco" upon it. Thus much I have done; I have swept off the lines about *widows* and *orphans* in second edition, which (if you remember) you most awkwardly and illogically caused to be inserted between two *Ifs*, to the great breach and disunion of said *Ifs*, which now meet again (as in first edition), like two clever lawyers arguing a case. Another reason for subtracting the pathos was, that the "Man of Ross" is too familiar to need telling what he did, especially in worse lines than Pope told it; and it now stands simply as "Reflections at an Inn about a known Character," and sucking an old story into an accommodation with present feelings. Here is no breaking spears with Pope, but a new, independent, and really a very pretty poem. In fact, 'tis as I used to admire it in the first volume, and I have even dared to restore

"If 'neath this roof thy *wine-cheer'd* moments pass,"

for

"Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass."

"Cheer'd" is a sad general word; "*wine-cheer'd*" I'm sure you'd give me, if I had a speaking-trumpet to sound to you 300 miles. But I am your *factotum*, and that (save in this instance, which is a single case, and I can't get at you) shall be next to a *fac-nihil*—at most, a *fac-simile*. I have ordered "Imitation of Spenser" to be restored on Wordsworth's authority; and now, all that you will miss will be "Flicker and Flicker's Wife," "The Thimble," "Breathe, *dear harmonist*," and, *I believe*, "The Child that was fed with Manna." Another volume will clear off all your Anthologic Morning-Postian Epistolary Miscellanies; but pray don't put "Christabel" therein; don't let that sweet maid come forth attended with Lady Holland's mob at her heels. Let there be a separate volume of Tales, Choice Tales, "Ancient Mariners," &c. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Coleridge, who was getting more and more nervous about his health, had long been on the point of starting on some southern travels with Thomas Wedgwood, but Wedgwood had gone alone; his friend James Webbe Tobin, mentioned later in the letter, lived at Nevis, in the West Indies: possibly Coleridge had thoughts of returning with him. The Malta experiment, of which we are to hear later, had not, I think, yet been mooted.

"The Man of Ross." In the 1797 edition the poem had run thus, partly by Lamb's advice (see the letters of June 10, 1796, and February 5, 1797, pages 18 and 92):—

LINES WRITTEN AT THE KING'S-ARMS, ROSS, FORMERLY THE HOUSE OF THE "MAN OF ROSS"

Richer than MISER o'er his countless hoards,
Nobler than KINGS, or king-polluted LORDS,
Here dwelt the MAN OF ROSS! O Trav'ller, hear!
Departed Merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he view'd his modest wealth;
He hears the widow's heaven-breath'd prayer of praise,
He marks the shelter'd orphan's tearful gaze,
Or where the sorrow-shrivel'd captive lay,
Pours the bright blaze of Freedom's noon-tide ray.
Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:
To higher zest shall MEM'RY wake thy soul,
And VIRTUE mingle in th' ennobled bowl.
But if, like me, thro' life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if, thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-tost in thought;
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of Goodness, thou hast never felt!

Lamb changed it by omitting lines 9 to 14, Coleridge agreeing. The poet would not, however, restore "wine-cheer'd" as in his earliest version, 1794. In the edition of 1828 the six lines were put back. "Breathe, dear Harmonist" was the poem "To the Rev. W. J. H.," and "The Child that was fed with Manna" was "On the Christening of a Friend's Child."

"Lady Holland's mob." Elizabeth Vassall Fox, third Lady Holland (1770-1845), was beginning her reign as a Muse. Lamb by his phrase means occasional and political verse generally. The reference to "Christabel" helps to controvert Fanny Godwin's remark in a letter to Mrs. Shelley, on July 20, 1816, that Lamb "says *Christabel* ought never to have been published; that no one understood it."

"Ancient Mariners." Canon Ainger's transcript adds: "A word of your health will be richly acceptable."]

LETTER 108

MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: July 9. P.M. July 11, 1803.]

MY dear Miss Wordsworth—We rejoice with exceeding great joy to hear the delightful tidings you were so *very* kind to remember to send us—I hope your dear sister is perfectly well,

and makes an excellent nurse. Are you not now the happiest family in the world?

I have been in better health and spirits this week past than since my last illness—I continued so long so very weak & dejected I began to fear I should never be at all comfortable again. I strive against low spirits all I can, but it is a very hard thing to get the better of.

I am very uneasy about poor Coleridge, his last letters are very melancholy ones. Remember me affectionately to him and Sara. I hope you often see him.

Southey is in town. He seems as proud of his little girl as I suppose your brother is of his boy; he says his home is now quite a different place to what it used to be. I was glad to hear him say this—it used to look rather chearless.

We went last week with Southey and Rickman and his sister to Sadlers Wells, the lowest and most London-like of all our London amusements—the entertainments were Goody Two Shoes, Jack the Giant Killer, and *Mary of Buttermere!* Poor Mary was very happily married at the end of the piece, to a sailor her former sweetheart. We had a prodigious fine view of her father's house in the vale of Buttermere—mountains very like large haycocks, and a lake like nothing at all. If you had been with us, would you have laughed the whole time like Charles and Miss Rickman or gone to sleep as Southey and Rickman did?

Stoddart is in expectation of going soon to Malta as Judge Advocate; it is likely to be a profitable situation, fifteen hundred a year or more. If he goes he takes with him his sister, and, as I hear from her as a very great secret, a *wife;* you must not mention this because if he stays in England he may not be rich enough to marry for some years. I do not know why I should trouble you with a secret which it seems I am unable to keep myself and which is of no importance to you to hear; if he succeeds in this appointment he will be in a great bustle, for he must set out to Malta in a month. In the mean time he must go to Scotland to marry and fetch his wife, and it is a match against her parents' consent, and they as yet know nothing of the Malta expedition; so that he expects many difficulties, but the young lady and he are determined to conquer them. He then must go to Salisbury to take leave of his father and mother, who I pity very much, for they are old people and therefore are not very likely ever to see their children again.

Charles is very well and very *good*—I mean very sober, but he is very good in every sense of the word, for he has been very kind and patient with me and I have been a sad trouble to him lately. He has shut out all his friends because he thought company hurt

me, and done every thing in his power to comfort and amuse me. We are to go out of town soon for a few weeks, when I hope I shall get quite stout and lively.

You saw Fenwick when you was with us—perhaps you remember his wife and children were with his brother, a tradesman at Penzance. He (the brother), who was supposed to be in a great way of business, has become a bankrupt; they are now at Penzance without a home and without money; and poor Fenwick, who has been Editor of a country newspaper lately, is likely soon to be quite out of employ; I am distressed for them, for I have a great affection for Mrs. Fenwick.

How pleasant your little house and orchard must be now. I almost wish I had never seen it. I am always wishing to be with you. I could sit upon that little bench in idleness day long. When you have a leisure hour, a letter from [you], kind friend, will give me the greatest pleasure.

We have money of yours and I want you to send me some commission to lay it out. Are you not in want of anything? I believe when we go out of town it will be to Margate—I love the seaside and expect much benefit from it, but your mountain scenery has spoiled us. We shall find the flat country of the Isle of Thanet very dull.

Charles joins me in love to your brother and sister and the little John. I hope you are building more rooms. Charles said I was so long answering your letter Mrs. Wordsworth would have another little one before you received it. Our love and compliments to our kind Molly, I hope she grows younger and happier every day. When, and where, shall I ever see you again? Not I fear for a very long time, you are too happy ever to wish to come to London. When you write tell me how poor Mrs. Clarkson does.

God bless you and yours.

I am your affectionate friend,

M. Lamb.

July 9th.

Note

[Wordsworth's eldest child, John, was born on June 18, 1803. Southey's little girl was Edith, born in September of the preceding year. It was Southey who made the charming remark that no house was complete unless it had in it a child rising six years, and a kitten rising six months.

Coleridge had been ill for some weeks after his visit to London. He was about to visit Scotland with the Wordsworths.

Mary of Buttermere was Mary Robinson, the Beauty of Buttermere, whom the swindler John Hatfield had married in October, 1802, under the false name of Hope. Mary was the daughter of

the landlord of the Fish Inn at Buttermere, and was famous in the Lake Country for her charm. Coleridge sent to the *Morning Post* in October some letters on the imposture, and Mary's name became a household word. Hatfield was hanged in September, 1803. Funds were meanwhile raised for Mary, and she ultimately married a farmer, after being the subject of dramas, ballads and novels.

The play which the Lambs saw was by Charles Dibdin the Younger, produced on April 11, 1803. Its title was "Edward and Susan; or, The Beauty of Buttermere." A benefit performance for the real Beauty of Buttermere was promised. Both Grimaldi and Belzoni were among the evening's entertainers.

Stoddart was the King's and the Admiralty's Advocate at Malta from 1803 to 1807. He married Isabella Moncrieff in 1803. His sister was Sarah Stoddart, of whom we are about to hear much.

According to the next letter the Lambs went not to Margate, but to the Isle of Wight—to Cowes, with the Burneys.

Molly was an old cottager at Grasmere whom the Lambs had been friendly with on their northern visit.

Mrs. Clarkson, the wife of Thomas Clarkson, was Catherine Buck. She survived her husband, who died in 1846.]

LETTER 109

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

Saturday Morning, July 16th, 1803.

DEAR Rickman,—I enclose you a wonder, a letter from the shades. A dead body wants to return, and be inrolled *inter vivos*. 'Tis a gentle ghost, and in this Galvanic age it may have a chance.

Mary and I are setting out for the Isle of Wight. We make but a short stay, and shall pass the time betwixt that place and Portsmouth, where Fenwick is. I sadly wanted to explore the Peak this Summer; but Mary is against steering without card or compass, and we should be at large in Darbyshire.

We shall be at home this night and to-morrow, if you can come and take a farewell pipe.

I regularly transmitted your Notices to the "Morning Post," but they have not been duly honoured. The fault lay not in me.—

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[I cannot explain the reference to the dead body. Mr. Bertram Dobell considers it to apply to an article which he believes Lamb to have written, called "An Appeal from the Shades," printed in the *London Magazine*, New Series, Vol. V. (see *Sidelights on Charles Lamb*, 1903, pages 140-152). I cannot, however, think that Lamb could write in 1803 in the deliberate manner of that essay; that the "Appeal" is by him; or that the reference in the letter is to an essay at all. I have no real theory to put forward; but it once occurred to me that the letter from the shades was from George Burnett, who had quarrelled with Rickman, and had now possibly appealed to his mercy through Lamb. Later, Burnett entered the militia as a surgeon, and at the beginning of 1804 he left for Poland. See Appendix II., page 969.]

LETTER 110

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[Dated at end: September 21, 1803.]

MY dear Sarah, I returned home from my visit yesterday, and was much pleased to find your letter; for I have been very anxious to hear how you are going on. I could hardly help expecting to see you when I came in; yet, though I should have rejoiced to have seen your merry face again, I believe it was better as it was—upon the whole; and, all things considered, it is certainly better you should go to Malta. The terms you are upon with your Lover does (as you say it will) appear wondrous strange to me; however, as I cannot enter into your feelings, I certainly can have nothing to say to it, only that I sincerely wish you happy in your own way, however odd that way may appear to me to be. I would begin now to advise you to drop all correspondence with William; but, as I said before, as I cannot enter into your feelings and views of things, *your ways not being my ways*, why should I tell you what I would do in your situation? So, child, take thy own ways, and God prosper thee in them!

One thing my advising spirit must say—use as little *Secrecy* as possible; and, as much as possible, make a friend of your sister-in-law—you know I was not struck with her at first sight; but, upon your account, I have watched and marked her very attentively; and, while she was eating a bit of cold mutton in our kitchen, we had a serious conversation. From the frankness of her manner, I

am convinced she is a person I could make a friend of; why should not you? We talked freely about you: she seems to have a just notion of your character, and will be fond of you, if you will let her.

My father had a sister lived with us—of course, lived with my Mother, her sister-in-law; they were, in their different ways, the best creatures in the world—but they set out wrong at first. They made each other miserable for full twenty years of their lives—my Mother was a perfect gentlewoman, my Aunty as unlike a gentlewoman as you can possibly imagine a good old woman to be; so that my dear Mother (who, though you do not know it, is always in my poor head and heart) used to distress and weary her with incessant and unceasing attention and politeness, to gain her affection. The old woman could not return this in kind, and did not know what to make of it—thought it all deceit, and used to hate my Mother with a bitter hatred; which, of course, was soon returned with interest. A little frankness, and looking into each other's characters at first, would have spared all this, and they would have lived, as they died, fond of each other for the last few years of their life. When we grew up, and harmonised them a little, they sincerely loved each other.

My Aunt and my Mother were wholly unlike you and your sister, yet in some degree theirs is the secret history I believe of all sisters-in-law—and you will smile when I tell you I think myself the only woman in the world who could live with a brother's wife, and make a real friend of her, partly from early observation of the unhappy example I have just given you, and partly from a knack I know I have of looking into people's real characters, and never expecting them to act out of it—never expecting another to do as I would in the same case. When you leave your Mother, and say, if you never shall see her again, you shall feel no remorse, and when you make a *jewish* bargain with your *Lover*, all this gives me no offence, because it is your nature, and your temper, and I do not expect or want you to be otherwise than you are. I love you for the good that is in you, and look for no change.

But, certainly, you ought to struggle with the evil that does most easily beset you—a total want of politeness in behaviour, I would say modesty of behaviour, but that I should not convey to you my idea of the word modesty; for I certainly do not mean that you want *real modesty;* and what is usually called false, or mock, modesty is [a quality] I certainly do not wish you to possess; yet I trust you know what I mean well enough.

Secrecy, though you appear all frankness, is certainly a grand failing of yours; it is likewise your *brother's*, and, therefore, a family failing—by secrecy, I mean you both want the habit of telling each

other at the moment every thing that happens—where you go,—and what you do,—the free communication of letters and opinions just as they arrive, as Charles and I do,—and which is, after all, the only groundwork of friendship. Your brother, I will answer for [it,] will never tell his wife or his sister all that [is in] his mind—he will receive letters, and not [mention it]. This is a fault Mrs. Stoddart can never [tell him of;] but she can, and will, feel it: though, [on] the whole, and in every other respect, she is [very] happy with him. Begin, for God's sake, at the first, and tell her every thing that passes. At first she may hear you with indifference; but in time this will gain her affection and confidence; show her all your letters (no matter if she does not show hers)—it is a pleasant thing for a friend to put into one's hand a letter just fresh from the post. I would even say, begin with showing her this, but that it is written freely and loosely, and some apology ought to be made for it—which I know not how to make, for I must write freely or not at all.

If you do this, she will tell your brother, you will say; and what then, quotha? It will beget a freer communication amongst you, which is a thing devoutly to be wished—

God bless you, and grant you may preserve your integrity, and remain unmarried and penniless, and make William a good and a happy wife.

Your affectionate friend,

M. Lamb.

Charles is very unwell, and my head aches. He sends his love: mine, with my best wishes, to your brother and sister.

I hope I shall get another letter from you.

Wednesday, 21st September, 1803.

Note

[Sarah Stoddart was the sister of Dr. John Stoddart, who had just been appointed the King's and the Admiralty's Advocate at Malta, whither Miss Stoddart followed him. Her lover of that moment was a Mr. Turner, and William was an earlier lover still. Her sister-in-law was Mrs. John Stoddart, *née* Isabella Moncrieff, whom her brother had only just married.

"My Mother." This is the only reference to her mother in any of Mary Lamb's letters. The sister was Sarah Lamb, usually known as Aunt Hetty.]

LETTERS 111 AND 112

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Nov. 8, 1803.

MY dear Sir,—I have been sitting down for three or four days successively to the review, which I so much wished to do well, and to your satisfaction. But I can produce nothing but absolute flatness and nonsense. My health and spirits are so bad, and my nerves so irritable, that I am sure, if I persist, I shall teaze myself into a fever. You do not know how sore and weak a brain I have, or you would allow for many things in me which you set down for whims. I solemnly assure you that I never more wished to prove to you the value which I have for you than at this moment; but although in so seemingly trifling a service I cannot get through with it, I pray you to impute it to this one sole cause, ill health. I hope I am above subterfuge, and that you will do me this justice to think so.

You will give me great satisfaction by sealing my pardon and oblivion in a line or two, before I come to see you, or I shall be ashamed to come.—Your, with great truth, C. LAMB.

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Nov. 10, 1803.

DEAR Godwin,—You never made a more unlucky and perverse mistake than to suppose that the reason of my not writing that cursed thing was to be found in your book. I assure you most sincerely that I have been greatly delighted with Chaucer. I may be wrong, but I think there is one considerable error runs through it, which is a conjecturing spirit, a fondness for filling out the picture by supposing what Chaucer did and how he felt, where the materials are scanty. So far from meaning to withhold from you (out of mistaken tenderness) this opinion of mine, I plainly told Mrs. Godwin that I did find a *fault*, which I should reserve naming until I should see you and talk it over. This she may very well remember, and also that I declined naming this fault until she drew it from me by asking me if there was not too much fancy in the work. I then confessed generally what I felt, but refused to go into particulars until I had seen you. I am never very fond of saying things before third persons, because in the relation (such is

human nature) something is sure to be dropped. If Mrs. Godwin has been the cause of your misconstruction, I am very angry, tell her; yet it is not an anger unto death. I remember also telling Mrs. G. (which she may have *dropt*) that I was by turns considerably more delighted than I expected. But I wished to reserve all this until I saw you. I even had conceived an expression to meet you with, which was thanking you for some of the most exquisite pieces of criticism I had ever read in my life. In particular, I should have brought forward that on "Troilus and Cressida" and Shakespear which, it is little to say, delighted me, and instructed me (if not absolutely *instructed* me, yet put into *full-grown sense* many conceptions which had arisen in me before in my most discriminating moods). All these things I was preparing to say, and bottling them up till I came, thinking to please my friend and host, the author! when lo! this deadly blight intervened.

I certainly ought to make great allowances for your misunderstanding me. You, by long habits of composition and a greater command gained over your own powers, cannot conceive of the desultory and uncertain way in which I (an author by fits) sometimes cannot put the thoughts of a common letter into sane prose. Any work which I take upon myself as an engagement will act upon me to torment, *e.g.*, when I have undertaken, as three or four times I have, a school-boy copy of verses for Merchant Taylors' boys, at a guinea a copy, I have fretted over them, in perfect inability to do them, and have made my sister wretched with my wretchedness for a week together. The same, till by habit I have acquired a mechanical command, I have felt in making paragraphs. As to reviewing, in particular, my head is so whimsical a head, that I cannot, after reading another man's book, let it have been never so pleasing, give any account of it in any methodical way. I cannot follow his train. Something like this you must have perceived of me in conversation. Ten thousand times I have confessed to you, talking of my talents, my utter inability to remember in any comprehensive way what I read. I can vehemently applaud, or perversely stickle, at *parts;* but I cannot grasp at a whole. This infirmity (which is nothing to brag of) may be seen in my two little compositions, the tale and my play, in both which no reader, however partial, can find any story. I wrote such stuff about Chaucer, and got into such digressions, quite irreducible into 1½ column of a paper, that I was perfectly ashamed to show it you. However, it is become a serious matter that I should convince you I neither slunk from the task through a wilful deserting neglect, or through any (most imaginary on your part) distaste of Chaucer; and I will try my hand again, I hope with better luck. My health is bad and my time taken up, but all I can spare between this and

Sunday shall be employed for you, since you desire it: and if I bring you a crude, wretched paper on Sunday, you must burn it, and forgive me; if it proves anything better than I predict, may it be a peace-offering of sweet incense between us. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Lamb's review of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*, issued in October, 1803, has not been identified. Perhaps it was never completed. See Letter 202. The criticism of "Troilus and Cressida" is in Chapter XVI.

Lamb's early Merchant Taylors' verses have been lost, but two epigrams that he wrote many years later for the sons of Hessey, the publisher, have been preserved (see Letter 491).

I place here the following letter, not having any clue as to date, which is immaterial :—]

LETTER 113

CHARLES LAMB TO MRS. WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR Mrs. G.,—Having observed with some concern that Mr. Godwin is a little fastidious in what he eats for supper, I herewith beg to present his palate with a piece of dried salmon. I am assured it is the best that swims in Trent. If you do not know how to dress it, allow me to add that it should be cut in thin slices and boiled in paper *previously prepared in butter*. Wishing it exquisite, I remain,—Much as before, yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

Some add *mashed potatoes*.

LETTER 114

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS POOLE

[Dated at end: Feb. 14, 1804.]

DEAR Sir—I am sorry we have not been able to hear of lodgings to suit young F. but we will not desist in the enquiry. In a day or two something may turn up. Boarding houses are common enough, but to find a family where he would be safe from impositions within & impositions without is not so easy.—

I take this opportunity of thanking you for your kind attentions to the Lad I took the liberty of recommending. *His* mother was disposed to have taken in young F. but could not possibly make room.

Your obliged &c

C. LAMB.

Temple, 14 Feb., 1804.

NOTE

[I do not know to what lads the note refers, but probably young F. was young Fricker, the brother of Mrs. Coleridge and Mrs. Southey. The note is interesting only as giving another instance of Lamb's willing helpfulness to others.]

LETTER 115

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. March 10, 1804.]

DR C. I blunderd open this letter, its weight making me conjecture it held an inclosure; but finding it poetry (which is no man's ground, but waste and common) I perused it. Do you remember that you are to come to us to-night? C. L.

To Mr. Coleridge,
Mr. Tobin's,
Barnards Inn, Holborn.

NOTE

[This is written on the back of a paper addressed to Mr. Lamb, India House, containing a long extract from "Madoc" in Southey's hand.

Coleridge, having been invited by Stoddart to Malta, was now in London on his way thither. Tobin was probably James Webbe Tobin, brother of John Tobin, the solicitor and dramatist.

Between this letter and the next comes a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, dated at the end March 13, 1804, in which Lamb congratulates Robert Lloyd on his approaching marriage to Hannah Hart. The wedding was celebrated on August 2, 1804.]

LETTER 116

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date, ? March, 1804.]

MY dearest Sarah,—I will just write a few hasty lines to say Coleridge is setting off sooner than we expected; and I every moment expect him to call in one of his great hurrys for this. Charles intended to write by him, but has not: most likely he will send a letter after him to Portsmouth: if he does, you will certainly hear from him soon. We rejoiced with exceeding joy to hear of your safe arrival: I hope your brother will return home in a few years a very rich man. Seventy pounds in one fortnight is a pretty beginning—

I envy your brother the pleasure of seeing Coleridge drop in unexpectedly upon him; we talk—but it is but wild and idle talk—of following him: he is to get my brother some little snug place of a thousand a year, and we are to leave all, and come and live among ye. What a pretty dream.

Coleridge is very ill. I dread the thoughts of his long voyage —write as soon as he arrives, whether he does or not, and tell me how he is.

Jamaica bodies . . . [*words illegible*].

He has got letters of recommendation to Governor Ball, and God knows who; and he will talk and talk, and be universally admired. But I wish to write for him a *letter of recommendation* to Mrs. Stoddart, and to yourself, to take upon ye, on his first arrival, to be kind affectionate nurses; and mind, now, that you perform this duty faithfully, and write me a good account of yourself. Behave to him as you would to me, or to Charles, if we came sick and unhappy to you.

I have no news to send you; Coleridge will tell you how we are going on. Charles has lost the newspaper; but what we dreaded as an evil has proved a great blessing, for we have both strangely recovered our health and spirits since this has happened; and I hope, when I write next, I shall be able to tell you Charles has begun something which will produce a little money; for it is not well to be *very poor*—which we certainly are at this present writing.

I sit writing here, and thinking almost you will see it to-morrow; and what a long, long time it will be ere you receive this—When I saw your letter, I fancy'd you were even just then in the first bustle of a new reception, every moment seeing new faces, and staring at

new objects, when, at that time, every thing had become familiar to you; and the strangers, your new dancing partners, had perhaps become gossiping fireside friends. You tell me of your gay, splendid doings; tell me, likewise, what manner of home-life you lead—Is a quiet evening in a Maltese drawing room as pleasant as those we have passed in Mitre Court and Bell yard?—Tell me all about it, every thing pleasant, and every thing unpleasant, that befalls you.

I want you to say a great deal about yourself. *Are you happy? and do you not repent going out?* I wish I could see you for one hour only.

Remember me affectionately to your sister and brother; and tell me, when you write, if Mrs. Stoddart likes Malta, and how the climate agrees with her and with thee.

We heard you were taken prisoners, and for several days believed the tale.

How did the pearls, and the fine court finery, bear the fatigues of the voyage, and how often have they been worn and admired?

Rickman wants to know if you are going to be married yet—satisfy him in that little particular when you write.

The Fenwicks send their love, and Mrs. Reynolds her love, and the little old lady her best respects.

Mrs. Jefferies, who I see now and then, talks of you with tears in her eyes, and, when she heard you was taken prisoner, Lord! how frightened she was. She has heard, she tells me, that Mr. Stoddart is to have a pension of two thousand a year, whenever he chuses to return to England.

God bless you, and send you all manner of comforts and happinesses.

Your most affectionate friend,

MARY LAMB.

How-do? how-do? No time to write. S. T. C. going off in a great hurry.

CH. LAMB.

NOTE

[Miss Stoddart was now in Malta. Governor Ball was Sir Alexander Ball, to whom Coleridge was to act as private secretary and of whom he wrote some years later in *The Friend*.

"Charles has lost the newspaper"—his work on the *Morning Post*. Lamb's principal period on this paper had begun after Stuart sold it in September, 1803, and it lasted until February, 1804 (see notes to *Elia*, Vol. II. of this edition).

"We heard you were taken prisoners"—by the French.

"Mrs. Reynolds"—Lamb's old schoolmistress and pensioner. Mrs. Jefferies I do not know.]

LETTER 117

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. April 4, 1804.]

Mary would send her best love, but I write at office.

Thursday [April 5].
The £1 came safe.

MY dear C.—I but just received your commission-abounding letter. All shall be done. Make your European heart easy in Malta, all shall be performed. You say I am to transcribe off part of your letters and send to X somebody (but the name is lost under the wafer, so you must give it me)—I suppose Wordsw^th.

I have been out of town since Saturday, the reason I had not your letter before. N.B. N.B. Knowing I had 2 or 3 Easter holydays, it was my intention to have ask'd you if my accompanying you to Portsm^th would have been pleasant. But you were not visible, except just at the critical moment of going off from the Inn, at which time I could not get at you. So Deus aliter disposuit, and I went down into Hertfordshire.

I write in great bustle indeed—God bless you again. Attend to what I have written mark'd X above, and don't merge any part of your Orders under seal again. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Addressed to "S. T. Coleridge, Esqr., J. C. Mottley's, Esqr., Portsmouth, Hants."

Coleridge had left London for Portsmouth on March 27; he sailed for Malta on April 9.

"*Deus aliter disposuit*"—"God ordered otherwise."]

LETTERS 118 AND 119

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS POOLE

[Dated at end: Temple, 4th May, 1804.]

DEAR Sir—I have no sort of connexion with the Morning Post at present, nor acquaintance with its late Editor (the present Editor of the Courier) to ask a favour of him with pro-

priety; but if it will be of any use, I believe I could get the insertions into the British Press (a Morning Paper) through a friend.—

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Dated at end: Temple, 5 May 1804.]

DEAR Sir—I can get the insertions into the British Press without any difficulty at all. I am only sorry that I have no interest in the M. Post, having so much greater circulation. If your friend chuses it, you will be so good as to return me the Critique, of which I forgot to take a copy, and I suppose on Monday or Tuesday it will be in. The sooner I have it, the better.

Yours &c.

C. LAMB.

I did formerly assist in the Post, but have no longer any engagement.—

NOTE

[Stuart, having sold the *Morning Post*, was now developing the *Courier*. The notes are interesting only as showing Lamb's attitude to Stuart. Writing to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in June, 1838, concerning his association as editor with Coleridge, Stuart said: "But as for good Charles Lamb, I never could make any-thing of his writings. Coleridge often and repeatedly pressed me to settle him on a salary, and often and repeatedly did I try; but it would not do. Of politics he knew nothing; they were out of his line of reading and thought; and his drollery was vapid, when given in short paragraphs fit for a newspaper: yet he has produced some agreeable books, possessing a tone of humour and kind feeling, in a quaint style, which it is amusing to read, and cheering to remember."]

LETTER 120

CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: June 2, 1804.]

DEAR Miss Wordsworth, the task of letter-writing in my family falls to me; you are the organ of correspondence in yours, so I address you rather than your brother. We are all

sensibly obliged to you for the little scraps (Arthur's Bower and his brethren) which you sent up; the bookseller has got them and paid Mrs. Fenwick for them. So while some are authors for fame, some for money, you have commenced author for charity. The least we can do, is to see your commissions fulfilled; accordingly I have booked this 2d June 1804 from the Waggon Inn in Cripplegate the watch and books which I got from your brother Richard, together with Purchas's Pilgrimage and Brown's Religio Medici which I desire your brother's acceptance of, with some *pens*, of which I observed no great frequency when I tarried at Grasmere. (I suppose you have got Coleridge's letter)—These things I have put up in a deal box directed to Mr. Wordsworth, Grasmere, near Ambleside, Kendal, by the Kendal waggon. At the same time I have sent off a parcel by C.'s desire to Mr. T. Hutchinson to the care of Mr. "T. Monkhouse, or T. Markhouse" (for C.'s writing is not very plain) Penrith, by the Penrith waggon this day; which I beg you to apprize them of, lest my direction fail. In your box, you will find a little parcel for Mrs. Coleridge, which she wants as soon as possible; also for yourselves the Cotton, Magnesia, bark and Oil, which come to £2. 3. 4. thus

	sh.
Thread and needles	17
Magnesia	8
bark	9 . 8
Oil	8 . 8
	2 . 3 . 4
packing case	2 6
	2 . 5 . 10
deduct a guinea I owe you, which C. was to pay, but did not	1 . 1 .—
leaves you indebted	1 . 4¼ . 10

whereby you may see how punctual I am.

I conclude with our kindest remembrances to your brother and Mrs. W.

We hear, the young John is a Giant.

And should you see Charles Lloyd, pray *forget* to give my love to him.

Yours truly, Dr Miss W.

C. Lamb.

June 2, 1804.

I send you two little copies of verses by Mary L—b :—

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A MOTHER AND CHILD

Child. " O Lady, lay your costly robes aside,
(*Sings*) No longer may you glory in your pride."

Mother. Wherefore to day art singing in mine ear
Sad songs were made so long ago, my dear?
This day I am to be a bride, you know.
Why sing sad songs were made so long ago?
Child. " O Mother lay your costly robes aside,"
For you may never be another's bride:
That line I learnt not in the old sad song.
Mother. I pray thee, pretty one, now hold thy tongue;
Play with the bride maids, and be glad, my boy,
For thou shalt be a second father's joy.
Child. One father fondled me upon his knee:
One father is enough alone for me.

Suggested by a print of 2 females after Leo[nardo da] Vinci, called Prudence & Beauty, which hangs up in our ro[om].
O! that you could see the print!!

The Lady Blanch, regardless of all her lovers' fears,
To the Ursuline Convent hastens, and long the Abbess hears:
" O Blanch, my child, repent thee of the courtly life ye lead."
Blanch looked on a rose-bud, and little seem'd to heed;
She looked on the rose-bud, she looked round, and thought
On all her heart had whisper'd, and all the Nun had taught.
" I am worshipped by lovers, and brightly shines my fame,
All Christendom resoundeth the noble Blanch's name;
Nor shall I quickly wither like the rose-bud from the tree,
My Queen-like graces shining when my beauty's gone from me.
But when the sculptur'd marble is raised o'er my head,
And the matchless Blanch lies lifeless among the noble dead,
This saintly Lady Abbess has made me justly fear,
It nothing will avail me that I were worshipt here."

I wish they may please you: we in these parts are not a little proud of them. C. L.

NOTE

[" The little scraps." Professor Knight tells me that the scraps were not written but only copied by Miss Wordsworth. Arthur's Bower ran thus:—

Arthur's bower has broke his band,
He comes riding up the land,
The King of Scots with all his power
Cannot build up Arthur's bower.

" Your brother Richard "—Wordsworth's eldest brother.
" Purchas's Pilgrimage." Samuel Purchas (1575?-1626) was the author of *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 1613; *Purchas His Pil-*

grim, 1619; and *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes*, 1625. This last is Purchas's best work, and is probably that which Lamb sent to Grasmere.

Mary Lamb's two poems, her earliest that we know, with the exception of "Helen" (see page 183), were printed in the *Works*, 1818.]

LETTER 121

MARY LAMB (AND CHARLES LAMB) TO SARAH STODDART

[Late July, 1804.]

MY dearest Sarah,—Your letter, which contained the news of Coleridge's arrival, was a most welcome one; for we had begun to entertain very unpleasant apprehensions for his safety; and your kind reception of the forlorn wanderer gave me the greatest pleasure, and I thank you for it in my own and my brother's name. I shall depend upon you for hearing of his welfare; for he does not write himself; but, as long as we know he is safe, and in such kind friends' hands, we do not mind. Your letters, my dear Sarah, are to me very, very precious ones. They are the kindest, best, most natural ones I ever received. The one containing the news of the arrival of Coleridge perhaps the best I ever saw; and your old friend Charles is of my opinion. We sent it off to Mrs. Coleridge and the Wordsworths—as well because we thought it our duty to give them the first notice we had of our dear friend's safety, as that we were proud of shewing our Sarah's pretty letter.

The letters we received a few days after from you and your brother were far less welcome ones. I rejoiced to hear your sister is well; but I grieved for the loss of the dear baby; and I am sorry to find your brother is not so successful as he at first expected to be; and yet I am almost tempted to wish his ill fortune may send him over [to] us again. He has a friend, I understand, who is now at the head of the Admiralty; why may he not return, and make a fortune here?

I cannot condole with you very sincerely upon your little failure in the fortune-making way. If you regret it, so do I. But I hope to see you a comfortable English wife; and the forsaken, forgotten William, of English-partridge memory, I have still a hankering after. However, I thank you for your frank communication, and I beg you will continue it in future; and if I do not agree with a good grace to your having a Maltese husband, I will wish you

happy, provided you make it a part of your marriage articles that your husband shall allow you to come over sea and make me one visit; else may neglect and overlookedness be your portion while you stay there.

I would condole with you when the misfortune has fallen your poor leg; but such is the blessed distance we are at from each other, that I hope, before you receive this, that you forgot it ever happened.

Our compliments [to] the high ton at the Maltese court. Your brother is so profuse of them to me, that being, as you know, so unused to them, they perplex me sadly; in future, I beg they may be discontinued. They always remind me of the free, and, I believe, very improper, letter I wrote to you while you were at the Isle of Wight. The more kindly you and your brother and sister took the impertinent advice contained in it, the more certain I feel that it was unnecessary, and therefore highly improper. Do not let your brother compliment me into the memory of it again.

My brother has had a letter from your Mother, which has distressed him sadly—about the postage of some letters being paid by my brother. Your silly brother, it seems, has informed your Mother (I did not think your brother could have been so silly) that Charles had grumbled at paying the said postage. The fact was, just at that time we were very poor, having lost the Morning Post, and we were beginning to practise a strict economy. My brother, who never makes up his mind whether he will be a Miser or a Spendthrift, is at all times a strange mixture of both: of this failing, the even economy of your correct brother's temper makes him an ill judge. The miserly part of Charles, at that time smarting under his recent loss, then happened to reign triumphant; and he would not write, or let me write, so often as he wished, because the postage cost two and four pence. Then came two or three of your poor Mother's letters nearly together; and the two and four pences he wished, but grudged, to pay for his own, he was forced to pay for hers. In this dismal distress, he applied to Fenwick to get his friend Motley to send them free from Portsmouth. This Mr. Fenwick could have done for half a word's speaking; but this he did not do! Then Charles foolishly and unthinkingly complained to your brother in a half serious, half joking way; and your brother has wickedly, and with malice afore thought, told your Mother. O fye upon him! what will your Mother think of us?

I too feel my share of blame in this vexatious business; for I saw the unlucky paragraph in my brother's letter; and I had a kind of foreboding that it would come to your Mother's ears—although I had a higher opinion of your brother's good sense than I find he deserved. By entreaties and prayers, I might have pre-

vailed on my brother to say nothing about it. But I make a point of conscience never to interfere or cross my brother in the humour he happens to be in. It always appears to me to be a vexatious kind of Tyranny, that women have no business to exercise over men, which, merely because *they having a better judgement*, they have the power to do. Let *men* alone, and at last we find they come round to the right way, which *we*, by a kind of intuition, perceive at once. But better, far better, that we should let them often do wrong, than that they should have the torment of a Monitor always at their elbows.

Charles is sadly fretted now, I know, at what to say to your Mother. I have made this long preamble about it to induce [you,] if possible, to reinstate us in your Mother's good graces. Say to her it was a jest misunderstood; tell her Charles Lamb is not the shabby fellow she and her son took him for; but that he is now and then a trifle whimsical or so. I do not ask your brother to do this, for I am offended with him for the mischief he has made.

I feel that I have too lightly passed over the interesting account you sent me of your late disappointment. It was not because I did not feel and compl[ete]ly enter into the affair with you. You surprise and please me with the frank and generous way in which you deal with your Lovers, taking a refusal from their so prudential hearts with a better grace and more good humour than other women accept a suitor's service. Continue this open artless conduct, and I trust you will at last find some man who has sense enough to know you are well worth risking a peaceable life of poverty for. I shall yet live to see you a poor, but happy, English wife.

Remember me most affectionately to Coleridge; and I thank you again and again for all your kindness to him. To dear Mrs. Stoddart and your brother, I beg my best love; and to you all I wish health and happiness, and a *soon* return to Old England.

I have sent to Mr. Burrel's for your kind present; but unfortunately he is not in town. I am impatient to see my fine silk handkerchiefs; and I thank you for them, not as a present, for I do not love presents, but as a [*word illegible*] remembrance of your old friend. Farewell.

I am, my best Sarah,
Your most affectionate friend,

MARY LAMB.

Good wishes, and all proper remembrances, from old nurse, Mrs. Jeffries, Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs. Rickman, &c. &c. &c.

Long live Queen Hoop-oop-oop-oo, and all the old merry phantoms!

[*Charles Lamb adds*:—]

My Dear Miss Stoddart,—Mary has written so fully to you, that I have nothing to add but that, in all the kindness she has exprest, and loving desire to see you again, I bear my full part. You will, perhaps, like to tear this half from the sheet, and give your brother only his strict due, the remainder. So I will just repay your late kind letter with this short postscript to hers. Come over here, and let us all be merry again. C. Lamb.

Note

[Coleridge reached Valetta on May 18, 1804; but no opportunity to send letters home occurred until June 5. Miss Stoddart seems to have given up all her lovers at home in the hope of finding one in Malta.

"The blessed distance." Here Mary Lamb throws out an idea afterwards developed by her brother in the *Elia* essay on "Distant Correspondents."

Lamb's letter to Stoddart containing the complaint as to postage no longer exists. Mrs. Stoddart, Sarah's mother, had remained in England, at Salisbury.

Of Mr. Burrel I know nothing, nor can I explain Queen Hoop-oop-oop-oo.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, dated September 13, 1804, not available for this edition, in which Lamb expresses his inability to accept an invitation, having had a month's holiday at Richmond. After alluding to Priscilla Lloyd's approaching marriage (to Christopher Wordsworth) he says that these new nuptials do not make him the less satisfied with his bachelor state.]

LETTER 122

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. October 13, 1804.]

(Turn over leaf for more letters.)

DEAR Wordsworth—I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is, and why should I not confess it? I am not plethorically abounding in Cash at this present. Merit, God knows, is very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself.

My motto is "Contented with little, yet wishing for more." Now the books you wish for would require some pounds, which I am sorry to say I have not by me: so I will say at once, if you will give me a draft upon your town-banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of [it] to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely, for it is a scurvy thing to cry Give me the money first, and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries: but the debt remains as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it!

The books which you want I calculate at about £8.

Ben Jonson is a Guinea Book. Beaumont & Fletcher in folio, the right folio, not now to be met with; the octavos are about £3. As to any other old dramatists, I do not know where to find them except what are in Dodsley's old plays, which are about £3 also: Massinger I never saw but at one shop, but it is now gone, but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve and the rest of King Charles's moralists are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will enquire after, but I fear, Spenser's is not to be had apart from his poems; I never saw it. But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old Poets & Dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for I suppose you do not include the £20 edition of Hamlet, single play, which Kemble has. Marlow's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one, and the other two, of his plays: but John Ford is the man after Shakespear. Let me know your will and pleasure soon: for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency without the penalty usually annex'd.

C. Lamb.

LETTER 123

MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

(Second part of Letter 122)

[P.M. October 13, 1804.]

MY dear Miss Wordsworth—I writ a letter immediately upon the receipt of yours, to thank you for sending me the welcome tidings of your little niece's birth, and Mrs. Wordsworth's

safety, & waited till I could get a frank to send it in. Not being able to procure one, I will defer my thanks no longer for fear Mrs. Wordsworth should add another little baby to your family, before my congratulations on the birth of the little Dorothy arrive.

I hope Mrs. Wordsworth, & the pretty baby, & the young philosopher, are well: they are three strangers to me whom I have a longing desire to be acquainted with.

My brother desires me not to send such a long gossiping letter as that I had intended for you, because he wishes to fill a large share of the paper with his acknowledgments to Mr. Wordsworth for his letters, which he considers as a very uncommon favor, your brother seldom writing letters. I must beg my brother will tell Mr. Wordsworth how very proud he has made me also by praising my poor verses. Will you be so kind as to forward the opposite page to Mrs. Coleridge. This sheet of paper is quite a partnership affair. When the parliament meets you shall have a letter for your sole use.

My brother and I have been this summer to Richmond; we had a lodging there for a month, we passed the whole time there in wandering about, & comparing the views from the banks of the Thames with your mountain scenery, & tried, & wished, to persuade ourselves that it was almost as beautiful. Charles was quite a Mr. Clarkson in his admiration and his frequent exclamations, for though we had often been at Richmond for a few hours we had no idea it was so beautiful a place as we found it on a month's intimate acquaintance.

We rejoice to hear of the good fortune of your brave sailor-brother, I should have liked to have been with you when the news first arrived.

Your very friendly invitations have made us long to be with you, and we promise ourselves to spend the first money my brother earns by writing certain books (Charles often plans but never begins) in a journey to Grasmere.

When your eyes (which I am sorry to find continue unwell) will permit you to make use of your pen again I shall be very happy to see a letter in your own hand writing.

I beg to be affectionately remembered to your brother & sister
& remain ever your affectionate friend

M. Lamb.

Compliments to old Molly.

LETTER 124

MARY LAMB TO MRS. S. T. COLERIDGE

(Third part of Letter 122)

[P.M. October 13, 1804.]

[*Charles Lamb adds:*—]

C. Lamb particularly desires to be remembered to Southey and all the Southeys, as well as to Mrs. C. and her little Coleridges. Mrs. C.'s letters have all been sent as Coleridge left word, to Motley's, Portsmouth.

MY dear Mrs. Coleridge—I have had a letter written ready to send to you, which I kept, hoping to get a frank, and now I find I must write one entirely anew, for that consisted of matter not now in season, such as condolence on the illness of your children, who I hope are now quite well, & comfortings on your uncertainty of the safety of Coleridge, with wise reasons for the delay of the letters from Malta, which must now be changed for pleasant congratulations. Coleridge has not written to us, but we have had two letters from the Stoddarts since the one I sent to you, containing good accounts of him, but as I find you have had letters from himself I need not tell you the particulars.

My brother sent your letters to Mr. Motley according to Coleridge's direction, & I have no doubt but he forwarded them.

One thing only in my poor letter the time makes no alteration in, which is that I have half a bed ready for you, & I shall rejoice with exceeding great joy to have you with me. Pray do not change your mind for I shall be sadly disappointed if you do. Will Hartley be with you? I hope he will, for you say he goes with you to Liverpool, and I conclude you come from thence to London.

I have seen your brother lately, and I find he entertains good hopes from Mr. Salte, and his present employment I hear is likely to continue a considerable time longer, so that I hope you may consider him as good as provided for. He seems very steady, and is very well spoken of at his office.

I have lately been often talking of you with Mrs. Hazlitt. William Hazlitt is painting my brother's picture, which has brought us acquainted with the whole family. I like William Hazlitt and his sister very much indeed, & I think Mrs. Hazlitt a pretty good-humoured woman. She has a nice little girl of the

Pypos kind, who is so fond of my brother that she stops strangers in the street to tell them when *Mr. Lamb is coming to see her.*

I hope Mr. Southey and your sister and the little Edith are well. I beg my love to them.

God bless you, and your three little darlings, & their wandering father, who I hope will soon return to you in high health & spirits.

I remain ever your affectionate friend

MARY LAMB.

Compliments to Mr. Jackson and darling friend. I hope they are well.

NOTE

["Contented with little . . ." Adapted from Burns, "Contented wi' Little":—

Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair.

The Ben Jonson in Lamb's own library was the 1692 folio; his Beaumont and Fletcher, which may be seen at the British Museum, was the folio 1647 or 1679.

Spenser's prose work, *View of the Present State of Ireland*, is that referred to.

"John Ford." Lamb says in the *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, "Ford was of the first order of poets."

Dorothy Wordsworth (afterwards the wife of Edward Quillinan) was born August 16, 1804.

"Your brave sailor-brother"—John Wordsworth.

Mrs. Coleridge now had three children—Hartley, Derwent and Sara. We do not know whether or no she stayed with the Lambs, as suggested. Her brother was George Fricker.

William Hazlitt's sister was Peggy Hazlitt. His sister-in-law, Mrs. Hazlitt, was the wife of John Hazlitt, the miniature painter.

Hazlitt's portrait of Lamb was the one in the dress of a Venetian senator, reproduced as frontispiece to Vol. IV. of this edition. It now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery.]

LETTER 125

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

7 Nov., 1804.

DEAR Southey,—You were the last person from whom we heard of Dyer, and if you know where to forward the news I now send to him, I shall be obliged to you to lose no time.

D.'s sister-in-law, who lives in St. Dunstan's Court, wrote to him about three weeks ago, to the Hope Inn, Cambridge, to inform him that Squire Houlbert, or some such name, of Denmark Hill, has died, and left her husband a thousand pounds, and two or three hundred to Dyer. Her letter got no answer, and she does not know where to direct to him; so she came to me, who am equally in the dark. Her story is, that Dyer's immediately coming to town now, and signing some papers, will save him a considerable sum of money—how, I don't understand; but it is very right he should hear of this. She has left me barely time for the post; so I conclude with all Love, &c., to all at Keswick.

Dyer's brother, who, by his wife's account, has got 1000*l.* left him, is father of the little dirty girl, Dyer's niece and factotum.

In haste,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

If you send George this, cut off the last paragraph.

D.'s laundress had a letter a few days since; but George never dates.

LETTER 126

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. February 18, 1805.]

MY dear Wordsworth, the subject of your letter has never been out of our thoughts since the day we first heard of it, and many have been our impulses towards you, to write to you, or to write to enquire about you; but it never seemed the time. We felt all your situation, and how much you would want Coleridge at such a time, and we wanted somehow to make up to you his absence, for we loved and honoured your Brother, and his death always occurs to my mind with something like a feeling of reproach, as if we ought to have been nearer acquainted, and as if there had been some incivility shown him by us, or something short of that respect which we now feel: but this is always a feeling when people die, and I should not foolishly offer a piece of refinement, instead of sympathy, if I knew any other way of making you feel how little like indifferent his loss has been to us. I have been for some time wretchedly ill and low, and your letter this morning has affected me so with a pain in my inside and a confusion, that I hardly know what to write or how. I have this

morning seen Stewart, the 2d mate, who was saved: but he can give me no satisfactory account, having been in quite another part of the ship when your brother went down. But I shall see Gilpin tomorrow, and will communicate your thanks, and learn from him all I can. All accounts agree that just before the vessel going down, your brother seemed like one overwhelmed with the situation, and careless of his own safety. Perhaps he might have saved himself; but a Captain who in such circumstances does all he can for his ship and nothing for himself, is the noblest idea. I can hardly express myself, I am so really ill. But the universal sentiment is, that your brother did all that duty required: and if he had been more alive to the feelings of those distant ones whom he loved, he would have been at that time a less admirable object; less to be exulted in by them: for his character is high with all that I have heard speak of him, and no reproach can fix upon him. Tomorrow I shall see Gilpin, I hope, if I can get at him, for there is expected a complete investigation of the causes of the loss of the ship, at the East India House, and all the Officers are to attend: but I could not put off writing to you a moment. It is most likely I shall have something to add tomorrow, in a second letter. If I do not write, you may suppose I have not seen G. but you shall hear from me in a day or two. We have done nothing but think of you, particularly of Dorothy. Mary is crying by me while I with difficulty write this: but as long as we remember any thing, we shall remember your Brother's noble person, and his sensible manly modest voice, and how safe and comfortable we all were together in our apartment, where I am now writing. When he returned, having been one of the triumphant China fleet, we thought of his pleasant exultation (which he exprest here one night) in the wish that he might meet a Frenchman in the seas; and it seem'd to be accomplished, all to his heart's desire. I will conclude from utter inability to write any more, for I am seriously unwell: and because I mean to gather something like intelligence to send to you tomorrow: for as yet, I have but heard second hand, and seen one narrative, which is but a transcript of what was common to all the Papers. God bless you all, and reckon upon us as entering into all your griefs. [*Signature cut away.*]

NOTE

[This is the first of a series of letters bearing upon the loss of the East Indiaman *Earl of Abergavenny*, which was wrecked off Portland Bill on February 6, 1805, 200 persons and the captain, John Wordsworth, being lost. The character of Wordsworth's "Happy Warrior" is said to have been largely drawn from his brother John. His age was only thirty-three.]

LETTER 127

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. February 19, 1805.]

MY dear Wordsworth, I yesterday wrote you a very unsatisfactory letter. To day I have not much to add, but it may be some satisfaction to you that I have seen Gilpin, and thanked him in all your names for the assistance he tried to give: and that he has assured me that your Brother did try to save himself, and was doing so when Gilpin called to him, but he was then struggling with the waves and almost dead. G. heard him give orders a very little before the vessel went down, with all possible calmness, and it does not at all appear that your Brother in any absence of mind neglected his own safety. But in such circumstances the memory of those who escaped cannot be supposed to be very accurate; and there appears to be about the Persons that I have seen a good deal of reservedness and unwillingness to enter into detail, which is natural, they being Officers of the Ship, and liable to be examined at home about its loss. The examination is expected to day or to-morrow, and if any thing should come out, that can interest you, I shall take an early opportunity of sending it to you.

Mary wrote some few days since to Miss Stoddart, containing an account of your Brother's death, which most likely Coleridge will have heard, before the letter comes: we both wish it may hasten him back. We do not know any thing of him, whether he is settled in any post (as there was some talk) or not. We had another sad account to send him, of the death of his schoolfellow Allen; tho' this, I am sure, will much less affect him. I don't know whether you knew Allen; he died lately very suddenly in an apoplexy. When you do and can write, particularly inform us of the healths of you all. God bless you all. Mary will write to Dorothy as soon as she thinks she will be able to bear it. It has been a sad tidings to us, and has affected us more than we could have believed. I think it has contributed to make me worse, who have been very unwell, and have got leave for some few days to stay at home: but I am ashamed to speak of myself, only in excuse for the unfeeling sort of huddle which I now send. I could not delay it, having seen Gilpin, and I thought his assurance might be some little ease to you.

We will talk about the Books, when you can better bear it. I have bought none yet. But do not spare me any office you can put

me on, now or when you are at leisure for such things. Adopt me as one of your family in this affliction; and use me without ceremony as such.

Mary's kindest Love to all. C. L.

Tuesday [Feb. 19].

NOTE

[Mary Lamb's letter to Miss Stoddart, here referred to, is no longer preserved. Coleridge a little later accepted the post of private secretary to the Governor of Malta, Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander John Ball. Allen was Bob Allen, whom we have already met.]

LETTER 128

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

16 Mitre-court Buildings,
Saturday, 24th [*i.e.*, 23rd] Feb., 1805.

DEAR Manning,—I have been very unwell since I saw you. A sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the swearing scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that "orders (to wit, for brawn), from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland, will be duly executed," &c. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumplets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander), the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, runaway gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leverets' ears, and such pretty filchings common to cooks;

but these had been ordinary presents, the everyday courtesies of dishwashers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem it. It is like a picture of one of the choice old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet,—"you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;" so brawn, you must taste it, ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But 'tis nuts to the adept: those that will send out their tongues and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed, and not unsought be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David's pictures (they call him *Darveed*), compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Correggio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his innuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu: I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard's brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp the barber, of St. Mary's, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chestnuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair just to remember him by; gifts are like nails. *Præsens ut absens*, that is, your *present* makes amends for your absence.

Yours, C. Lamb.

Note

[This letter is, I take it, a joke: that is to say, the brawn was sent to Lamb by Manning, who seems to have returned to Cambridge for a while, and Lamb affects to believe that Hopkins, from whom it was bought, was the giver. I think this view is supported by the reference to Mr. Crisp, at the end,—Mr. Crisp being Manning's late landlord.

The letter contains Lamb's second expression of epicurean rapture: the first in praise of pig.

"As Wordsworth sings"—in the "Poet's Epitaph":—

> He is retired as noontide dew,
> Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
> And you must love him, ere to you
> He will seem worthy of your love.

"David"—the French painter.

"*Præsens ut absens.*" Lamb enlarged upon the topic of gifts and giving many years later, in the Popular Fallacy "That we must not look a Gift Horse in the Mouth," 1826, and in his "Thoughts on Presents of Game," 1833.]

LETTER 129

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. March 5, 1805.]

MY dear Wordsworth, if Gilpin's statement has afforded you any satisfaction, I can assure you that he was most explicit in giving it, and even seemed anxious (interrupting me) to do away any misconception. His statement is not contradicted by the last and fullest of the two Narratives which have been published (the former being a mere transcript of the newspapers), which I would send you if I did not suppose that you would receive more pain from the unfeeling canting way in which it is drawn up, than satisfaction from its contents; and what relates to your brother in particular is very short. It states that your brother was seen talking to the First Mate but a few minutes before the ship sank, with apparent cheerfulness, and it contradicts the newspaper account about his depression of spirits procrastinating his taking leave of the Court of Directors; which the drawer up of the Narrative (a man high in the India House) is likely to be well informed of. It confirms Gilpin's account of his seeing your brother striving to save himself, and adds that "Webber, a Joiner, was near the Captain, who was standing on the hencoop when the ship went down, whom he saw washed off by a sea, which also carried him (Webber) overboard;"—this is all which concerns your brother personally. But I will just transcribe from it, a Copy of Gilpin's account delivered in to the Court of Directors:—

"Memorandum respecting the Loss of the E. of A."

"At 10 A.M. being about 10 leagues to the westward of Portland, the Commodore made the signal to bear up—did so accordingly; at this time having maintop gallant mast struck, fore and mizen

d°. on deck, and the jib boom in the wind about W.S.W. At 3 P.M. got on board a Pilot, being about 2 leagues to the westward of Portland; ranged and bitted both cables at about ½ past 3, called all hands and got out the jib boom at about 4. While crossing the east End of the Shambles, the wind suddenly died away, and a strong tide setting the ship to the westward, drifted her into the breakers, and a sea striking her on the larboard quarter, brought her to, with her head to the northward, when she instantly struck, it being about 5 P.M. Let out all the reefs, and hoisted the topsails up, in hopes to shoot the ship across the Shambles. About this time the wind shifted to the N.W. The surf driving us off, and the tide setting us on alternately, sometimes having 4½ at others 9 fathoms, sand of the sea about 8 feet; continued in this situation till about ½ past 7, when she got off. During the time she was on the Shambles, had from 3 to 4 feet water; kept the water at this height about 15 minutes, during the whole time the pumps constantly going. Finding she gained on us, it was determined to run her on the nearest shore. About 8 the wind shifted to the eastward: the leak continuing to gain upon the pumps, having 10 or 11 feet water, found it expedient to bale at the forescuttles and hatchway. The ship would not bear up—kept the helm hard a starboard, she being water-logg'd: but still had a hope she could be kept up till we got her on Weymouth Sands. Cut the lashings of the boats—could not get the Long Boat out, without laying the main-top-sail aback, by which our progress would have been so delayed, that no hope would have been left us of running her aground, and there being several sloops in sight, one having sent a small skiff on board, took away 2 Ladies and 3 other passengers, and put them on board the sloop, at the same time promising to return and take away a hundred or more of the people: she finding much difficulty in getting back to the sloop, did not return. About this time the Third Mate and Purser were sent in the cutter to get assistance from the other ships. Continued pumping and baling till 11 P.M. when she sunk. Last cast of the lead 11 fathoms; having fired guns from the time she struck till she went down, about 2 A.M. boats came and took the people from the wreck about 70 in number. The troops, in particular the Dragoons, pumped very well.

"(Signed) THO^{s}. GILPIN."

And now, my dear W.—I must apologize for having named my health. But indeed it was because, what with the ill news, your letter coming upon me in a most wretched state of ill spirits, I was scarce able to give it an answer, and I felt what it required.

But we will say no more about it. I am getting better. And when I have persisted time enough in a course of regular living I shall be well. But I am now well enough; and have got to business afresh. Mary thanks you for your invitation. I have wished myself with you daily since the news. I have wished that I were Coleridge, to give you any consolation. You have not mourned without one to have a feeling of it. And we have not undervalued the intimation of your friendship. We shall one day prove it by intruding on your privacy, when these griefs shall be a little calmed. This year, I am afraid, it is impossible: but I shall store it up as among the good things to come, which keep us up when life and spirits are sinking.

If you have not seen, or wish to see, the wretched narrative I have mentioned, I will send it. But there is nothing more in it affecting you. I have hesitated to send it, because it is unfeelingly done, and in the hope of sending you something from some of the actual spectators; but I have been disappointed, and can add nothing yet. Whatever I pick up, I will store for you. It is perfectly understood at the E. I. House, that no blame whatever belongs to the Captn. or Officers.

I can add no more but Mary's warmest Love to all. When you can write without trouble, do it, for you are among the very chief of our interests. C. Lamb.

4 March.

LETTER 180

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: March 21, 1805.]

DEAR Wordsworth, upon the receipt of your last letter before that which I have just received, I wrote myself to Gilpin putting your questions to him; but have yet had no answer. I at the same time got a person in the India House to write a much fuller enquiry to a relative of his who was saved, one Yates a midshipman. Both these officers (and indeed pretty nearly all that are left) have got appointed to other ships and have joined them. Gilpin is in the Comet, India-man, now lying at Gravesend. Neither Yates nor Gilpin have yet answered, but I am in daily expectation. I have sent your letter of this morning also to Gilpin. The waiting for these answers has been my reason for not writing you. I have made very particular enquiries about Webber, but in vain. He was a common seaman (not the ship's carpenter) and no traces

of him are at the I. House: it is most probable that he has entered in some Privateer, as most of the crew have done. I will keep the £1 note till you find out something I can do with it. I now write idly, having nothing to send: but I cannot bear that you should think I have quite neglected your commission. My letter to G. was such as I thought he could not but answer: but he may be busy. The letter to Yates I hope I can promise will be answered. One thing, namely why the other ships sent no assistance, I have learn'd from a person on board one of them: the firing was never once heard, owing to the very stormy night, and no tidings came to them till next morning. The sea was quite high enough to have thrown out the most expert swimmer, and might not your brother have received some blow in the shock, which disabled him? We are glad to hear poor Dorothy is a little better. None of you are able to bear such a stroke. To people oppressed with feeling, the loss of a good-humoured happy man that has been friendly with them, if he were no brother, is bad enough. But you must cultivate his spirits, as a legacy: and believe that such as he cannot be lost. He was a chearful soul! God bless you. Mary's love always.

C. LAMB.

21st March, 1805.

LETTER 131

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. April 5, 1805.]

DEAR Wordsworth, I have this moment received this letter from Gilpin in reply to 3 or 4 short questions I put to him in my letter before yours for him came. He does not notice having rec[d] yours, which I sent immediately. Perhaps he has already answered it to you. You see that his hand is sprain'd, and your questions being more in number, may delay his answer to you. My first question was, when it was he called to your brother: the rest you will understand from the answers. I was beginning to have hard thoughts of G. from his delay, but now I am confirm'd in my first opinion that he is a rare good-hearted fellow. How is Dorothy? and all of you?

Yours sincerely

C. LAMB.

4th question was, was Capt. W. standing near the shrouds or any place of safety at the moment of sinking?

Comet,
Northfleet, March 31st, 1805.

Sir—I did not receive yours of 16th inst. till this day, or shd. have answered it sooner. To your first Question, I answer after the Ship had sunk. To your second, my answer is, I was in the Starboard Mizen Rigging—I thought I see the Captn. hanging by a Rope that was fast to the Mizen Mast. I came down and haild him as loud as I could, he was about 10 feet distant from me. I threw a rope which fell close to him, he seem'd quite Motionless and insensible (it was excessive cold), and was soon after sweep'd away, and I see him no more. It was near about five minutes after the Ship went down. With respect to the Captn and Webber being on the same Hencoop, I can give no answer, all I can say, I did not see them. Your fourth Question, I cannot answer, as I did not see Capt. Wordsworth at the moment the Ship was going down, tho I was then on the Poop less than one minute before I see the Captn there. The Statement in the printed Pamphlet is by no means correct. I have sprained my Wrist, most violently, and am now in great pain, which will, I hope, be an apology for the shortness of this Letter.

believe me truly yours*
Thos. Gilpin.

This Letter as been detained till April 5th.

* This is merely a kind way of expressing himself, for I have no acquaintance with him, nor ever saw him but that once I got introduced to him.

I think I did not mention in my last, that I sent yours to T. Evans, Richmond. I hope you have got an answer.

LETTER 132

MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. May 7, 1805.]

My dear Miss Wordsworth—I thank you, my kind friend, for your most comfortable letter. Till I saw your own handwriting, I could not persuade myself that I should do well to write to you, though I have often attempted it, but I always left off dissatisfied with what I had written, and feeling that I was doing an improper thing to intrude upon your sorrow. I wished to tell you, that you would one day feel the kind of peaceful state of mind, and sweet memory of the dead which you so happily describe as now almost begun, but I felt that it was improper, and most grating to the feelings of the afflicted, to say to them that the memory of their affliction would in time become a constant part not only of their "dream, but of their most wakeful sense of happiness." That you would see every object with, and through your lost brother, and that that would at last become a real and everlasting source of comfort to you, I felt, and well knew from my own experience in sorrow, but till you yourself began to feel this

I did not dare tell you so, but I send you some poor lines which I wrote under this conviction of mind, and before I heard Coleridge was returning home. I will transcribe them now before I finish my letter, lest a false shame prevent me then, for I know they are much worse than they ought to be, written as they were with strong feeling and on such a subject. Every line seems to me to be borrowed, but I had no better way of expressing my thoughts, and I never have the power of altering or amending anything I have once laid aside with dissatisfaction.

Why is he wandering on the sea?
Coleridge should now with Wordsworth be.
By slow degrees he'd steal away
Their woe, and gently bring a ray
(So happily he'd time relief)
Of comfort from their very grief.
He'd tell them that their brother dead
When years have passed o'er their head,
Will be remember'd with such holy,
True, and perfect melancholy
That ever this lost brother John
Will be their heart's companion.
His voice they'll always hear, his face they'll always see,
There's nought in life so sweet as such a memory.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson came to see us last week, I find it was at your request they sought us out; you cannot think how glad we were to see them, so little as we have ever seen of them, yet they seem to us like very old friends. Poor Mrs. Clarkson looks very ill indeed, she walked near a mile, and came up our high stairs, which fatigued her very much, but when she had sat a while her own natural countenance with which she cheared us in your little cottage seemed to return to her, and then I began to have hopes she would get the better of her complaint. Charles does not think she is so much altered as I do. I wish he may be the better judge. We talked of nothing but you. She means to try to get leave of Dr. Beddoes to come and see you—her heart is with you, and I do not think it would hurt her so much to come to you, as it would distress you to see her so ill.

She read me a part of your letter wherein you so kindly express your wishes that we would come and see you this summer. I wish we could, for I am sure it would be a blessed thing for you and for us to be a few weeks together—I fear it must not be. Mrs. Clarkson is to be in town again in a fortnight and then they have promised we shall see more of them.

I am very sorry for the poor little Dorothy's illness—I hope soon to hear she is perfectly recovered. Remember me with affection to your brother, and your good sister. What a providence it is that your brother and you have this kind friend, and these

dear little ones—I rejoice with her and with you that your brother is employed upon his poem again.

Pray remember us to Old Molly. Mrs. Clarkson says her house is a pattern of neatness to all her neighbours—such good ways she learnt of "Mistress." How well I remember the shining ornaments of her kitchen, and her old friendly face, not [the] least ornamental part of it.

Excuse the haste I write in. I am unexpectedly to go out to dinner, else I think I have much more to say, but I will not put it off till next post, because you so kindly say I must not write if I feel unwilling—you do not know what very great joy I have in being again writing to you. Thank you for sending the letter of Mr. Evans, it was a very kind one. Have you received one from a Cornet Burgoine? My brother wrote to him and desires he would direct his answer to your brother.

God bless you and yours my dear friend.

I am yours affectionately

M. Lamb.

Note

["Dream, but of their most wakeful sense . . ." I have not found this.

Dr. Beddoes, who was attending Mrs. Clarkson, would be, I suppose, Thomas Beddoes of Clifton (1760-1808), the father of Thomas Lovell Beddoes and a friend of Coleridge and Southey.

In a letter from Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson, dated April 19, 1805 (recently printed by Mr. Hale White in the *Athenæum*), we read:—

I have great pleasure in thinking that you may see Miss Lamb; do not miss it if you can possibly go without injury to yourself—they are the best good creatures—blessings be with them! they have sympathised in our sorrow as tenderly as if they had grown up in the same [town?] with us and known our beloved John from his childhood. Charles has written to us the most consolatory letters, the result of diligent and painful inquiry of the survivors of the wreck,—for this we must love him as long as we have breath. I think of him and his sister every day of my life, and many times in the day with thankfulness and blessings. Talk to dear Miss Lamb about coming into this country and let us hear what she says of it. I cannot express how much we all wish to see her and her brother while we are at Grasmere. We look forward to Coleridge's return with fear and painful hope—but indeed I dare not look to it—I think as little as I can of him.]

LETTER 133

CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[*Slightly torn. The conjectures in square brackets are Talfourd's.*]

Friday, 14th June, 1805.

MY dear Miss Wordsworth, Your long kind letter has not been thrown away (for it has given me great pleasure to find you are all resuming your old occupations, and are better) but poor Mary to whom it is addrest cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday week was the day she left me; and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month, or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have in this case contributed to her indisposition. But when she begins to discover symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down, and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary; but I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a [fool, ber]eft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I [should think] wrong; so used am I to look up to her [in the least] and the biggest perplexity. To say *all that* [I know of her] would be more than I think any body could [believe or even under]stand; and when I hope to have her well [again with me] it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her: for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older, and wiser, and better, than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me. And I know I have been wasting and teazing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed drinking and ways of going on. But even in this up-braiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade.

I am stupid and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid.

Poor Miss Stoddart! she is coming to England under the notion of passing her time between her mother and Mary, between London and Salisbury. Since she talk'd of coming, word has been sent to Malta that her Mother is gone out of her mind. This Letter, with mine to Stoddart with an account of Allen's death, &c., has miscarried (taken by the French) [*word missing*]. She is coming home, with no soul to receive [*words missing*]. She has not a woman-friend in London.

I am sure you will excuse my writing [any more, I] am very poorly. I cannot resist tra[nscribing] three or four Lines which poor Mary made upon a Picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an Auction only one week before she left home. She was then beginning to show signs of ill boding. They are sweet Lines, and upon a sweet Picture. But I send them, only as the last memorial of her.

VIRGIN AND CHILD. L. DA VINCI

Maternal Lady with the Virgin-grace,
Heaven-born thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madona fair, to worship thee.

You had her lines about the "Lady Blanch." You have not had some which she wrote upon a copy of a girl from Titian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung, in our room. 'Tis light and pretty.

Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place
Of Blanch, the Lady of the matchless grace?
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me
Who in thy lifetime thou mightst be?
Thou pretty art and fair,
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare.
No need for Blanch her history to tell,
Whoever saw her face, they there did read it well.
But when I look on thee, I only know
There liv'd a pretty maid some hundred years ago.

This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance. That you may go on gathering strength and peace is the next wish to Mary's recovery.

I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we

ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait. It is not a balance of this way of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand, which my wise conduct has already incroach'd upon one half. My best Love, however, to you all; and to that most friendly creature, Mrs. Clarkson, and better health to her, when you see or write to her. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The reference to Miss Stoddart is explained later, in Letter No. 135.

Mary Lamb's two poems were included in the *Works*, 1818. "Lady Blanch" is the poem quoted on page 290.]

LETTER 134

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated by Mr. Hazlitt: July 27, 1805.]

DEAR Archimedes,—Things have gone on badly with thy ungeometrical friend; but they are on the turn. My old housekeeper has shown signs of convalescence, and will shortly resume the power of the keys, so I shan't be cheated of my tea and liquors. Wind in the west, which promotes tranquillity. Have leisure now to anticipate seeing thee again. Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. [*A sentence omitted here.*] Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics, to restrain the fire of my genius, which G. D. recommends. Have frequent bleedings at the nose, which shows plethoric. Maybe shall try the sea myself, that great scene of wonders. Got incredibly sober and regular; shave oftener, and hum a tune, to signify cheerfulness and gallantry.

Suddenly disposed to sleep, having taken a quart of pease with bacon and stout. Will not refuse Nature, who has done such things for me!

Nurse! don't call me unless Mr. Manning comes.—What! the gentleman in spectacles?—Yes.

Dormit. C. L.

Saturday,
Hot Noon.

NOTE

["Have been taking leave of tobacco." See page 317; also page 648.]

LETTER 135

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[? Sep. 18, 1805.]

MY dear Sarah,—I have made many attempts at writing to you, but it has always brought your troubles and my own so strongly into my mind, that I have been obliged to leave off, and make Charles write for me. I am resolved now, however few lines I write, this shall go; for I know, my kind friend, you will like once more to see my own handwriting.

I have been for these few days past in rather better spirits, so that I begin almost to feel myself once more a living creature, and to hope for happier times; and in that hope I include the prospect of once more seeing my dear Sarah in peace and comfort in our old garret. How did I wish for your presence to cheer my drooping heart when I returned home from banishment.

Is your being with, or near, your poor dear Mother necessary to her comfort? does she take any notice of you? and is there any prospect of her recovery? How I grieve for her and for you. . . .

I went to the Admiralty about your Mother's pension; from thence I was directed to an office in Lincoln's Inn, where they are paid. They informed me at the office that it could not be paid to any person except Mr. Wray, without a letter of attorney from your Mother; and as the stamp for that will cost one pound, it will, perhaps, be better to leave it till Mr. Wray comes to town, if he does come before Christmas; they tell me it can be received any Thursday between this and Christmas. If you send up a letter of Attorney, let it be in my name. If you think, notwithstanding their positive assurance to the contrary, that you can put me in any way of getting it without, let me know. Are you acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and will my taking another letter from you to him be of any service? or will a letter from Mr. Wray be of any use?—though I fear not, for they said at the office they had orders to pay no pension without a letter of Attorney. The attestation you sent up, they said, was sufficient, and that the same must be sent every year. Do not let us neglect this business; and make use of me in any way you can.

I have much to thank you and your kind brother for; I kept the dark silk, as you may suppose: you have made me very fine; the broche is very beautiful. Mrs. Jeffries wept for gratitude when she saw your present; she desires all manner of thanks and good wishes. Your maid's sister was gone to live a few miles from town; Charles, however, found her out, and gave her the handkerchief.

I want to know if you have seen William, and if there is any prospect in future there. All you said in your letter from Portsmouth that related to him was burnt so in the fumigating, that we could only make out that it was unfavourable, but not the particulars; tell us again how you go on, and if you have seen him: I conceit affairs will some how be made up between you at last.

I want to know how your brother goes on. Is he likely to make a very good fortune, and in how long a time? And how is he, in the way of home comforts?—I mean, is he very happy with Mrs. Stoddart? This was a question I could not ask while you were there, and perhaps is not a fair one now; but I want to know how you all went on—and, in short, twenty little foolish questions that one ought, perhaps, rather to ask when we meet, than to write about. But do make me a little acquainted with the inside of the good Doctor's house, and what passes therein.

Was Coleridge often with you? or did your brother and Col. argue long arguements, till between the two great argue-ers there grew a little coolness?—or perchance the mighty friendship between Coleridge and your Sovereign Governor, Sir Alexander Ball, might create a kind of jealousy, for we fancy something of a coldness did exist, from the little mention ever made of C. in your brother's letters.

Write us, my good girl, a long, gossiping letter, answering all these foolish questions—and tell me any silly thing you can recollect—any, the least particular, will be interesting to us, and we will never tell tales out of school: but we used to wonder and wonder, how you all went on; and when you was coming home we said, "Now we shall hear all from Sarah."

God bless you, my dear friend.

I am ever your affectionate

MARY LAMB.

If you have sent Charles any commissions he has not executed, write me word—he says he has lost or mislaid a letter desiring him to inquire about a wig.

Write two letters—one of business and pensions, and one all about Sarah Stoddart and Malta. Is Mr. Moncrief doing well there?

Wednesday morning.

We have got a picture of Charles; do you think your brother would like to have it? If you do, can you put us in a way how to send it?

NOTE

[Mrs. Stoddart was the widow of a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. Mr. Wray and Mr. Pearce were presumably gentlemen connected

with the Admiralty or in some way concerned with the pension. "William" is still the early William—not William Hazlitt, whom Sarah was destined to marry. Mr. Moncrieff would be Mrs. John Stoddart's eldest brother, who was a King's Advocate in the Admiralty Court at Malta. The picture of Charles might be some kind of reproduction of Hazlitt's portrait of him, painted in the preceding year; but more probably, I think, a few copies of Hancock's drawing, made in 1798 for Cottle, had been struck off.]

LETTER 186

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. September 28, 1805.]

MY dear Wordsworth (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right.)—I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy, or, I believe the true state of the case, so diffident, that it must revert to me as usual. Though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them, and that and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy) often deter her where no other reason does. We have neither of us been very well for some weeks past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am: so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us not unaptly Gum Boil and Tooth Ache: for they use to say that a Gum Boil is a great relief to a Tooth Ache. We have been two tiny excursions this summer, for three or four days each: to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is: and that is the total history of our Rustications this year. Alas! how poor a sound to Skiddaw, and Helvellyn, and Borrodaile, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802. Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that "last infirmity of Noble Mind," and her Cow—Providence need not have set her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lovingly to her. And in particular remember us to Mrs. Clarkson in the most kind manner. I hope by southwards you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favorite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as is possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times we ever past. We were quite

strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too?—our kindest separate remembrances to him.

As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job, and having had a long idleness, I must do something, or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce—but hitherto all schemes have gone off,—an idle brag or two of an evening vaporing out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have bid farewell to my "Sweet Enemy" Tobacco, as you will see in my next page, I perhaps shall set soberly to work. Hang Work! I wish that all the year were holyday. I am sure that Indolence indefeazible Indolence is the true state of man, and business the invention of the Old Teazer who persuaded Adam's Master to give him an apron and set him a houghing. Pen and Ink, and Clerks, and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer a thousand years after, under pretence of Commerce allying distant shores, promoting and diffusing knowledge, good &c.—

A FAREWELL TO TOBACCO

May the Babyloniah curse
Strait confound my stammering verse,
If I can a passage see
In this word-perplexity,
Or a fit expression find,
Or a language to my mind,
(Still the phrase is wide an acre)
To take leave of thee, Tobacco;
Or in any terms relate
Half my Love, or half my Hate,
For I hate yet love thee so,
That, whichever Thing I shew,
The plain truth will seem to be
A constrain'd hyperbole,
And the passion to proceed
More from a Mistress than a Weed.

Sooty retainer to the vine,
Bacchus' black servant, negro fine,
Sorcerer that mak'st us doat upon
Thy begrim'd complexion,
And, for thy pernicious sake
More and greater oaths to break
Than reclaimed Lovers take
'Gainst women: Thou thy siege dost lay
Much too in the female way,
While thou suck'st the labouring breath
Faster than kisses; or than Death.

Thou in such a cloud dost bind us,
That our worst foes cannot find us,
And Ill Fortune (that would thwart us)
Shoots at rovers, shooting at us;

While each man thro' thy heightening steam,
Does like a smoking Etna seem,
And all about us does express
(Fancy and Wit in richest dress)
A Sicilian Fruitfulness.

Thou through such a mist dost shew us,
That our best friends do not know us;
And, for those allowed features,
Due to reasonable creatures,
Liken'st us to fell Chimeras,
Monsters, that, who see us, fear us,
Worse than Cerberus, or Geryon,
Or, who first loved a cloud, Ixion.

Bacchus we know, and we allow
His tipsy rites. But what art thou?
That but by reflex canst shew
What his deity can do,
As the false Egyptian spell
Aped the true Hebrew miracle—
Some few vapours thou may'st raise,
The weak brain may serve to amaze,
But to the reins and nobler heart
Canst nor life nor heat impart.

Brother of Bacchus, later born,
The old world was sure forlorn,
Wanting thee; that aidest more
The God's victories than before
All his panthers, and the brawls
Of his piping Bacchanals;
These, as stale, we disallow,
Or judge of *thee* meant: only thou
His true Indian Conquest art;
And, for Ivy round his dart,
The reformed God now weaves
A finer Thyrsus of thy leaves.

Scent to match thy rich perfume
Chymic art did ne'er presume
Through her quaint alembic strain;
None so sovran to the brain.
Nature, that did in thee excell,
Framed again no second smell.
Roses, violets, but toys
For the smaller sort of boys,
Or for greener damsels meant;
Thou'rt the only manly scent.

Stinking'st of the stinking kind,
Filth of the mouth and fog of the mind,
Africa that brags her foyson,
Breeds no such prodigious poison,
Henbane, nightshade, both together,
Hemlock, aconite———

Nay rather,
Plant divine, of rarest virtue,
Blisters on the tongue would hurt you;
'Twas but in a sort I blamed thee,
None e'er prosper'd who defamed thee:

Irony all, and feign'd abuse,
Such as perplext Lovers use
At a need, when in despair
To paint forth their fairest fair,
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies does so strike,
They borrow language of Dislike,
And instead of Dearest Miss,
Honey, Jewel, Sweetheart, Bliss,
And, those forms of old admiring,
Call her Cockatrice and Syren,
Basilisk and all that's evil,
Witch, Hyena, Mermaid, Devil,
Ethiop wench, and Blackamoor,
Monkey, Ape, and twenty more,
Friendly Traitress, Loving Foe:
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot,
Whether it be pain or not.

Or, as men, constrain'd to part
With what's nearest to their heart,
While their sorrow's at the height,
Lose discrimination quite,
And their hasty wrath let fall,
To appease their frantic gall,
On the darling thing whatever,
Whence they feel it death to sever,
Though it be, as they, perforce,
Guiltless of the sad divorce.

For I must (nor let it grieve thee,
Friendliest of plants, that I must) leave thee—
For thy sake, TOBACCO, I
Would do anything but die;
And but seek to extend my days
Long enough to sing thy praise.
But, as She, who once has been
A King's consort, is a Queen
Ever after; nor will bate
Any tittle of her state,
Though a widow, or divorced,
So I, from thy converse forced,
The old name and style retain,
(A right Katherine of Spain;)
And a seat too 'mongst the joys
Of the blest Tobacco Boys:
Where, though I by sour physician
Am debarr'd the full fruition
Of thy favours, I may catch
Some collateral sweets, and snatch
Sidelong odours, that give life
Like glances from a neighbour's wife;
And still dwell in the by-places,
And the suburbs of thy graces,
And in thy borders take delight,
An unconquer'd Canaanite.

I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my "Friendly Traitress." Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years: and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even, when it has become a habit. This Poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote "Hester Savory." I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but Tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me head aches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for Poetry, and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to shew you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The "Tobacco," being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes) perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then, everybody will have seen it that I wish to see it: I have sent it to Malta.

I remain Dear W. and D— yours truly,

C. Lamb.

28th Sep., 1805.

Note

["Last infirmity of noble mind" (*Lycidas*, 71).

"Sweet Enemy." Sir Philip Sidney's phrase, of France, in the sonnets. "Friendly Traitress." Lamb may have been thinking of Helena's phrase,

> A counsellor, a traitress and a dear.
> "All's Well," I., 1, 184.

"Hang Work." This paragraph is the germ of the sonnet entitled "Work" which Lamb wrote fourteen years later (see page 572). He seems always to have kept his thoughts in sight.

The "Farewell to Tobacco" was printed in the *Reflector*, No. IV., 1811 or 1812, and then in the *Works*, 1818 (see Notes to Vol. V. of this edition, pages 298-300.) Lamb's farewell was frequently repeated; but it is a question whether he ever entirely left off smoking. Talfourd says that he did; but the late Mrs. Coe, who remembered Lamb at Widford about 1827-1830, credited him with the company of a black clay pipe. It was Lamb who, when Dr. Parr asked him how he managed to emit so much smoke, replied that he had toiled after it as other men after virtue. And Macready relates that he remarked in his presence that he wished to draw his last breath through a pipe and exhale it in a pun.

"Hester Savory." See page 262.]

LETTER 137

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[Early November, 1805.]

MY dear Sarah,—Certainly you are the best letter-writer (besides writing the best hand) in the world. I have just been reading over again your two long letters, and I perceive they make me very envious. I have taken a bran new pen, and put on my *spectacles*, and am peering with all my might to see the lines in the paper, which the sight of your even lines had well nigh tempted me to rule: and I have moreover taken two pinches of snuff extraordinary, to clear my head, which feels more cloudy than common this fine, chearful morning.

All I can gather from your clear and, I have no doubt, faithful history of Maltese politics is, that the good Doctor, though a firm friend, an excellent fancier of brooches, a good husband, an upright Advocate, and, in short, all that they say upon tomb stones (for I do not recollect that they celebrate any fraternal virtues there) yet is but a *moody* brother, that your sister in law is pretty much like what all sisters in law have been since the first happy invention of the happy marriage state; that friend Coleridge has undergone no alteration by crossing the Atlantic,—for his friendliness to you, as well as all the oddities you mention, are just what one ought to look for from him; and that you, my dear Sarah, have proved yourself just as unfit to flourish in a little, proud Garrison Town as I did shrewdly suspect you were before you went there.

If I possibly can, I will prevail upon Charles to write to your brother by the conveyance you mention; but he is so unwell, I almost fear the fortnight will slip away before I can get him in the right vein. Indeed, it has been sad and heavy times with us lately: when I am pretty well, his low spirits throws me back again; and when he begins to get a little chearful, then I do the same kind office for him. I heartily wish for the arrival of Coleridge; a few such evenings as we have sometimes passed with him would wind us up, and set us a going again.

Do not say any thing, when you write, of our low spirits—it will vex Charles. You would laugh, or you would cry, perhaps both, to see us sit together, looking at each other with long and rueful faces, and saying, "how do you do?" and "how do you do?" and then we fall a-crying, and say we will be better on the morrow. He says we are like tooth-ach and his friend gum bile—which,

though a kind of ease, is but an uneasy kind of ease, a comfort of rather an uncomfortable sort.

I rejoice to hear of your Mother's amendment; when you can leave her with any satisfaction to yourself—which, as her sister, I think I understand by your letters, is with her, I hope you may soon be able to do—let me know upon what plan you mean to come to Town. Your brother proposed your being six months in Town, and six with your Mother; but he did not then know of your poor Mother's illness. By his desire, I enquired for a respectable family for you, to board with; and from Captn. Burney I heard of one I thought would suit you at that time. He particularly desires I would not think of your being with us, not thinking, I conjecture, the home of a single man *respectable* enough. Your brother gave me most unlimited orders to domineer over you, to be the inspector of all your actions, and to direct and govern you with a stern voice and a high hand, to be, in short, a very elder brother over you—does not the hearing of this, my meek pupil, make you long to come to London? I am making all the proper enquiries against the time of the newest and most approved modes (being myself mainly ignorant in these points) of etiquette, and nicely correct maidenly manners.

But to speak seriously. I mean, when we mean [? meet], that we will lay our heads together, and consult and contrive the best way of making the best girl in the world the fine Lady her brother wishes to see her; and believe me, Sarah, it is not so difficult a matter as one is sometimes apt to imagine. I have observed many a demure Lady, who passes muster admirably well, who, I think, we could easily learn to imitate in a week or two. We will talk of these things when we meet. In the mean time, I give you free license to be happy and merry at Salisbury in any way you can. Has the partridge-season opened any communication between you and William—as I allow you to be imprudent till I see you, I shall expect to hear you have invited him to taste his own birds. Have you scratched him out of your will yet? Rickman is married, and that is all the news I have to send you.

Your Wigs were sent by Mr. Varvell about five months ago; therefore, he could have arrived when you came away.

I seem, upon looking over my letter again, to have written too lightly of your distresses at Malta; but, however I may have written, believe me, I enter very feelingly into all your troubles. I love you, and I love your brother; and between you, both of whom I think have been to blame, I know not what to say—only this I say, try to think as little as possible of past miscarriages; it was, perhaps, so ordered by Providence, that you might return home to be a comfort to your poor Mother. And do not, I con-

jure you, let her unhappy malady afflict you too deeply. I speak from experience, and from the opportunity I have had of much observation in such cases, that insane people, in the fancy's they take into their heads, do not feel as one in a sane state of mind does under the real evil of poverty, the perception of having done wrong, or any such thing that runs in their heads.

Think as little as you can, and let your whole care be to be certain that she is treated with *tenderness*. I lay a stress upon this, because it is a thing of which people in her state are uncommonly susceptible, and which hardly any one is at all aware of: a hired nurse *never*, even though in all other respects they are good kind of people. I do not think your own presence necessary, unless she *takes to you very much*, except for the purpose of seeing with your own eyes that she is very kindly treated.

I do so long to see you! God bless and comfort you!

Yours affectionately,
M. LAMB.

NOTE

[Miss Stoddart had now returned to England, to her mother at Salisbury, who had been and was very ill. Coleridge meanwhile had had coolnesses with Stoddart and had transferred himself to the roof of the Governor.

Rickman married, on October 30, 1805, Susanna Postlethwaite of Harting, in Sussex.]

LETTER 138

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

November 10, 1805.

DEAR Hazlitt,—I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened, which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communication, but which, seated about our fire at night, (the winter hands of pork have begun) gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about Rickman's wife, for instance: how tall she is and that she visits prank'd out like a Queen of the May with green streamers—a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things too about MONKEY, which can't so well be written—how it set up for a fine Lady, and thought it had got

Lovers, and was obliged to be convinc'd of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace;—these and such like Hows were in my head to tell you, but who can write? Also how Manning's come to town in spectacles, and studies physic; is melancholy and seems to have something in his head, which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking. O la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried thro' the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of Beauty. I have now for ever!—the small head, the [*here is drawn a long narrow eye*] long Eye,—that sort of peering curve, the wicked Italian mischief! the stick-at-nothing, Herodias'-daughter kind of grace. You understand me. But you disappoint me, in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you see it? Excuse a Lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr. Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way: for instance, Milton and Mr. Dawe. Mr. Dawe has chosen to illustrate the story of Sampson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview between the Jewish Hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his Locks grown again, strong as horse-hair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs "which of a nation armed contained the strength." I don't remember, he *says* black: but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. Dawe with striking originality of conception has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's, in curl and quantity resembling Mrs. Professor's, his Limbs rather stout, about such a man as my Brother or Rickman—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so bony as Dubois, the Clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact: for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a Temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British Navy.—Miss Dawe is about a portrait of sulky Fanny Imlay, alias Godwin: but Miss Dawe is of opinion that her subject is neither reserved nor sullen, and doubtless she will persuade the picture to be of the same opinion. However, the features are tolerably like—Too much of Dawes! Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall (I was prejudiced against him before) looking just as a Hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a Great Man we

had. Nobody is left of any Name at all. His Secretary died by his side. I imagined him, a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's; but I learn from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs. H. one day, and agreed to go on the Sunday to Tea, but the rain prevented us, and the distance. I have been to apologise, and we are to dine there the first fine Sunday. Strange perverseness! I never went while you staid here, and now I *go to find you!* What other news is there, Mary?—What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish for the Comic. "O! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send the American Farmer. I dare say it isn't so good as he fancies; but a Book's a Book." I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession tomorrow. We sup at 109 Russell St. this evening. I wish your brother wouldn't drink. It's a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian Lady, a Leonardo one, nick-named the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c.—and questioned about seducing a Duke from his wife and the State, makes answer:

> "Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me?
> So may you blame some fair and chrystal river,
> For that some melancholic distracted man
> Hath drown'd himself in it."—

Our ticket was a £20. Alas!! are both yours blanks?

P.S.—Godwin has asked after you several times.

N.B.—I shall expect a Line from you, if but a bare Line, whenever you write to Russell St., and a Letter often when you do not. I pay no postage; but I will have consideration for you until parliament time and franks. Luck to Ned Search and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her Love, and Mary especially.

Yours truly, C. Lamb.

Note

[Addressed to Hazlitt at Wem. This is the first letter from Lamb to Hazlitt that has been preserved. The two men first met at Godwin's. Holcroft and Coleridge were disputing which was best—man as he is, or man as he ought to be. Lamb broke in with, "Give me man as he ought *not* to be."

Hazlitt at this date was twenty-six, some three years younger than Lamb. He had just abandoned his project of being a painter and was settling down to literary work.

"Rickman's wife." This passage holds the germ of Lamb's essay on "The Behaviour of Married Persons," first printed in the

Reflector, No. IV., in 1811 or 1812, and afterwards included with the *Elia* essays.

"Monkey" was Louisa Martin, a little girl of whom Lamb was fond and whom he knew to the end of his life (see Letter 576).

Manning studied medicine at the Westminster Hospital for six months previous to May, 1806.

"The Oxford Leonardos . . . the Blenheim Leonardo." The only Leonardos at Oxford are the drawings at Christ Church. The Blenheim Leonardo was probably Boltraffio's "Virgin and Child" which used to be ascribed to Da Vinci, as indeed were many pictures he never painted. Hazlitt subsequently wrote a work on the Picture Galleries of England, but he mentions none of these works.

"Mr. Dawe's gallery." George Dawe (1781-1829), afterwards R.A., of whom Lamb wrote his essay "Recollections of a Late Royal Academician," where he alludes again to the picture of Samson (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 331).

"Which of a nation armed contained the strength" (*Samson Agonistes*, 1494).

"Dyson's." Dyson was a friend of Godwin. Mrs. Professor was Mrs. Godwin.

"Miss Dawe." I know nothing further of George Dawe's sister. Fanny Imlay was the unfortunate daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (by Gilbert Imlay the author). She committed suicide in 1816.

Nelson was killed on October 21, 1805. Scott was his chaplain, and he was not killed.

Hume was Joseph Hume, an official at Somerset House, whom we shall meet again directly.

The *American Farmer* was very likely Gilbert Imlay's novel *The Emigrants*, 1793, or possibly his *Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America*, 1792.

Charles Kemble, brother of John Philip Kemble and father of Fanny Kemble.

John Hazlitt, the miniature painter, lived at 109 Russell Street.

Lamb's quotation, afterwards included in his *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, is from Webster's "The White Devil," Act III., Scene 1.

The £20 ticket was presumably in the Lottery. Lamb's essay "The Illustrious Defunct" (see Vol. I., page 259) shows him to have been interested in Lotteries; and in Letter No. 178 Mary Lamb states that he wrote Lottery puffs.

"Ned Search." Hazlitt was engaged on an abridgment of *The Light of Nature Pursued*, in seven volumes, 1768-1778, nominally by Edward Search, but really by Abraham Tucker.

"The new art of colouring" is a reference, I fancy, to Tingry, mentioned again on page 331.]

LETTER 139

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[November 9 and 14, 1805.]

MY dear Sarah,—After a very feverish night, I writ a letter to you; and I have been distressed about it ever since. In the first place, I have thought I treated too lightly your differences with your brother—which I freely enter into and feel for, but which I rather wished to defer saying much about till we meet. But that which gives me most concern is the way in which I talked about your Mother's illness, and which I have since feared you might construe into my having a doubt of your showing her proper attention without my impertinent interference. God knows, nothing of this kind was ever in my thoughts; but I have entered very deeply into your affliction with regard to your Mother; and while I was wishing, the many poor souls in the kind of desponding way she is in, whom I have seen, came afresh into my mind; and all the mismanagement with which I have seen them treated was strong in my mind, and I wrote under a forcible impulse, which I could not at that time resist, but I have fretted so much about it since, that I think it is the last time I will ever let my pen run away with me.

Your kind heart will, I know, even if you have been a little displeased, forgive me, when I assure you my spirits have been so much hurt by my last illness, that at times I hardly know what I do. I do not mean to alarm you about myself, or to plead an excuse; but I am very much otherwise than you have always known me. I do not think any one perceives me altered, but I have lost all self-confidence in my own actions, and one cause of my low spirits is, that I never feel satisfied with any thing I do—a perception of not being in a sane state perpetually haunts me. I am ashamed to confess this weakness to you; which, as I am so sensible of, I ought to strive to conquer. But I tell you, that you may excuse any part of my letter that has given offence: for your not answering it, when you are such a punctual correspondent, has made me very uneasy.

Write immediately, my dear Sarah, but do not notice this letter, nor do not mention any thing I said relative to your poor Mother. Your handwriting will convince me you are friends with me; and if Charles, who must see my letter, was to know I had first written foolishly, and then fretted about the event of my folly, he would both ways be angry with me.

I would desire you to direct to me at home, but your hand is so well known to Charles, that that would not do. Therefore, take no notice of my megrums till we meet, which I most ardently long to do. An hour spent in your company would be a cordial to my drooping heart.

Pray write directly, and believe me, ever

Your affectionate friend,

M. Lamb.

Nov. 14.—I have kept this by me till to-day, hoping every day to hear from you. If you found the seal a clumsy one, it is because I opened the wafer.

Write, I beg, by the return of the post; and as I am very anxious to hear whether you are, as I fear, dissatisfied with me, you shall, if you please, direct my letter to Nurse. Her direction is, Mrs. Grant, at Mr. Smith's, *Maidenhead*, Ram Court, Fleet Street.

I was not able, you know, to notice, when I writ to Malta, your letter concerning an insult you received from a vile wretch there; and as I mostly show my letters to Charles, I have never named it since. Did it ever come to your brother's knowledge? Charles and I were very uneasy at your account of it. I wish I could see you.

Yours ever,

M. Lamb.

I do not mean to continue a secret correspondence, but you must oblige me with this one letter. In future I will always show my letters before they go, which will be a proper check upon my wayward pen.

LETTERS 140 AND 141

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. Nov. 15, 1805.]

DEAR Manning,—Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed. We did pray for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious—pearls of extraordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them—given them in clusters to ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

This night we shall be at home, so shall we certainly both Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don't say of one, but choose which evening you will not, and come the other four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases. O! I forgot, bring the £10, for fear you should lose it. C. L.

[I append another note, without a date, printed by Talfourd:—]

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR Manning,—I sent to Brown's immediately. Mr. Brown (or Pijou, as he is called by the moderns) denied the having received a letter from you. The one for you he remembered receiving, and remitting to Leadenhall Street; whither I immediately posted (it being the middle of dinner), my teeth unpicked. There I learned that if you want a letter set right, you must apply at the first door on the left hand before one o'clock. I returned and picked my teeth. And this morning I made my application in form, and have seen the vagabond letter, which most likely accompanies this. If it does not, I will get Rickman to name it to the Speaker, who will not fail to lay the matter before Parliament the next sessions, when you may be sure to have all abuses in the Post Department rectified.

N.B. There seems to be some informality epidemical. You direct yours to me in Mitre Court; my true address is Mitre Court Buildings. By the pleasantries of Fortune, who likes a joke or a *double entendre* as well as the best of her children, there happens to be another Mr. Lamb (that there should be two!!) in Mitre Court.

Farewell, and think upon it. C. L.

NOTE

[Here should come a letter from Mary Lamb to Mrs. Clarkson, dated December 25, 1805, printed by Mr. Macdonald. It states that Lamb has been latterly in indifferent health, and is unimportant.]

LETTER 142

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

Thursday, 15th Jan., 1806.

DEAR Hazlitt,—Godwin went to Johnson's yesterday about your business. Johnson would not come down, or give any answer, but has promised to open the manuscript, and to give you an answer in one month. Godwin will punctually go again

(Wednesday is Johnson's open day) yesterday four weeks next: *i.e.* in one lunar month from this time. Till when Johnson positively declines giving any answer. I wish you joy on ending your Search. Mrs. H. was naming something about a Life of Fawcett, to be by you undertaken: the great Fawcett, as she explain'd to Manning, when he ask'd, *What Fawcett!* He innocently thought *Fawcett the player*. But Fawcett the Divine is known to many people, albeit unknown to the Chinese Enquirer. I should think, if you liked it, and Johnson declined it, that Phillips is the man. He is perpetually bringing out Biographies, Richardson, Wilkes, Foot, Lee Lewis, without number: little trim things in two easy volumes price 12*s.* the two, made up of letters to and from, scraps, posthumous trifles, anecdotes, and about forty pages of hard biography. You might dish up a Fawcettiad in 3 months, and ask 60 or 80 Pounds for it. I should dare say that Phillips would catch at it—I wrote to you the other day in a great hurry. Did you get it? This is merely a Letter of business at Godwin's request.

Lord Nelson is quiet at last. His ghost only keeps a slight fluttering in odes and elegies in newspapers, and impromptus, which could not be got ready before the funeral.

As for news—We have Miss Stoddart in our house, she has been with us a fortnight and will stay a week or so longer. She is one of the few people who are not in the way when they are with you. No tidings of Coleridge. Fenwick is coming to town on Monday (if no kind angel intervene) to surrender himself to prison. He hopes to get the Rules of the Fleet. On the same, or nearly the same, day, Fell, my other quondam co-friend and drinker, will go to Newgate, and his wife and 4 children, I suppose, to the Parish. Plenty of reflection and motives of gratitude to the wise disposer of all things in *us*, whose prudent conduct has hitherto ensured us a warm fire and snug roof over our heads. *Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia.*

Alas! Prudentia is in the last quarter of her tutelary shining over me. A little time and I ——

But may be I may, at last, hit upon some mode of collecting some of the vast superfluities of this money-voiding town. Much is to be got, and I don't want much. All I ask is time and leisure; and I am cruelly off for them.

When you have the inclination, I shall be very glad to have a letter from you.—Your brother and Mrs. H., I am afraid, think hardly of us for not coming oftener to see them, but we are distracted beyond what they can conceive with visitors and visitings. I never have an hour for my head to work quietly its own workings; which you know is as necessary to the human system as sleep.

Sleep, too, I can't get for these damn'd winds of a night: and without sleep and rest what should ensue? Lunacy. But I trust it won't.

Yours, dear H., mad or sober, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Hazlitt's business was finding a publisher for his abridgment of Search (see page 326). Johnson was Priestley's publisher. A letter to Godwin from Coleridge in June, 1803 (see Mr. Kegan Paul's *Life of Godwin*, II., 96), had suggested such an abridgment, Coleridge adding that a friend of his would make it, and that he would write a preface and see the proofs through the press. Hence Godwin's share in the matter. Coleridge's part of the transaction was not carried out.

Hazlitt's Life of Joseph Fawcett (? 1758-1804), the poet and dissenting preacher of Walthamstow and Old Jewry, whom he had known intimately, was not written. The Fawcett of whom Manning, the Chinese Enquirer, was thinking was John Fawcett, famous as Dr. Pangloss and Caleb Quotem.

"The Fleet"—the prison for debtors in Farringdon Street. Closed in 1844. The Rules of the Fleet were the limits within which prisoners for debt were under certain conditions permitted to live: the north side of Ludgate Hill, the Old Bailey up to Fleet Lane, Fleet Lane to Fleet Market, and then back to Ludgate Hill. The Rules cost money: £10 for the first £100 of the debt and for every additional £100, £4. Later, Fenwick seems to have settled in America.

"*Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia*"—"No protecting deity is wanting, if there is prudence." Adapted from Juvenal, Satire X., 365.

Here should come an undated letter, not available for this edition (printed by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in *Lamb and Hazlitt*). The letter was accompanied by Tingry's *Painter's and Varnisher's Guide*, 1804. Hazlitt, who was then painting, seems to have wanted prints of trees, probably for a background. Lamb says that he has been hunting in shop windows for him. He adds: "To supply poetry and wildness, you may read the *American Farmer* over again" (see Letter No. 138). The postscript runs, "Johnson shall not be forgot at his month's end" (see above).]

LETTER 143

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

Jan. 25th, 1806.

DEAR Rickman,—You do not happen to have any place at your disposal which would suit a decayed Literatus? I do not much expect that you have, or that you will go much out of the way to serve the object, when you hear it is Fenwick. But the case is, by a *mistaking* of his *turn*, as they call it, he is reduced, I am afraid, to extremities, and would be extremely glad of a place in an office. Now it does sometimes happen, that just as a man wants a place, a place wants him; and though this is a lottery to which none but G. B. would choose to trust his all, there is no harm just to call in at Despair's office for a friend, and see if *his* number is come up (B.'s further case I enclose by way of episode). Now, if you should happen, or anybody you know, to want a *hand*, here is a young man of solid but not brilliant genius, who would turn his hand to the making out dockets, penning a manifesto, or scoring a tally, not the worse (I hope) for knowing Latin and Greek, and having in youth conversed with the philosophers. But from these follies I believe he is thoroughly awakened, and would bind himself by a terrible oath never to imagine himself an extraordinary genius again.

Yours, &., C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Mr. Hazlitt's text, which I follow here, makes Lamb appeal for Fenwick; but other editors say Fell—except Talfourd, who says F. If, as Lamb says in his previous letter, Fell was bound for Newgate and Fenwick only for the Fleet, probably it was Fenwick. But the matter is not very important. Fenwick and Fell both came into Lamb's life through Godwin and at this point they drop out. The enclosure concerning George Burnett is missing.]

LETTER 144

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: February 1st, 1806.]

DEAR Wordsworth—I have seen the Books which you ordered, booked at the White Horse Inn, Cripplegate, by the Kendal waggon this day 1st Feby. 1806; you will not fail

to see after them in time. They are directed to you at Grasmere. We have made some alteration in the Editions since your sister's directions. The handsome quarto Spencer which she authorized Mary to buy for £2. 12. 6, when she brought it home in triumph proved to be *only the Fairy Queen:* so we got them to take it again and I have procured instead a Folio, which luckily contains, besides all the Poems, the view of the State of Ireland, which is difficult to meet with. The Spencer, and the Chaucer, being noble old books, we did not think Stockdale's modern volumes would look so well beside them; added to which I don't know whether you are aware that the Print is *excessive small*, same as Eleg. Extracts, or smaller, not calculated for eyes in age; and Shakespear is one of the last books one should like to give up, perhaps the one just before the Dying Service in a large Prayer book. So we have used our own discretion in purchasing Pope's fine Quarto in six volumes, which may be read ad ultimam horam vitæ. It is bound like Law Books (rather, half bound) and the Law Robe I have ever thought as comely and gentlemanly a garb as a Book would wish to wear. The state of the purchase then stands thus,

Urry's Chaucer	£1 .	16	—
Pope's Shakespeare	2 .	2	—
Spenser		14	—
Milton	1 .	5	—
Packing Case &c.		3 .	6
	6 .	— .	6

Which your Brother immediately repaid us. He has the Bills for all (by his desire) except the Spenser, which we took no bill with (not looking to have our accounts audited): so for that and the Case he took a separate receipt for 17/6. N.B. there is writing in the Shakespear: but it is only variæ lectiones which some careful gentleman, the former owner, was at the pains to insert in a very neat hand from 5 Commentators. It is no defacement. The fault of Pope's edition is, that he has comically and coxcombically marked the Beauties: which is vile, as if you were to chalk up the cheek and across the nose of a handsome woman in red chalk to shew where the comeliest parts lay. But I hope the noble type and Library-appearance of the Books will atone for that. With the Books come certain Books and Pamphlets of G. Dyer, Presents or rather Decoy-ducks of the Poet to take in his thus-far obliged friends to buy his other works; as he takes care to inform them in M.S. notes to the Title Pages, "G. Dyer, Author of other Books printed for Longman &c." The books have lain at your dis-

patchful brother's a 12 months, to the great staling of most of the subjects. The three Letters and what is else written at the beginning of the respective *Presents* will ascertain the division of the Property. If not, none of the Donees, I dare say, will grudge a community of property in this case. We were constrained to pack 'em how we could, for room. Also there comes W. Hazlitt's book about Human Action, for Coleridge; a little song book for Sarah Coleridge; a Box for Hartley which your Brother was to have sent, but now devolved on us—I don't know from whom it came, but the things altogether were too much for Mr. (I've forgot his name) to take charge of; a Paraphrase on the King and Queen of Hearts, of which I being the Author beg Mr. Johnny Wordsworth's acceptance and opinion. *Liberal Criticism*, as G. Dyer declares, I am always ready to attend to!—And that's all, I believe. N.B. I must remain Debtor to Dorothy for 200 pens: but really Miss Stoddart (women are great gulfs of Stationery), who is going home to Salisbury and has been with us some weeks, has drained us to the very last pen: by the time S. T. C. passes thro' London I reckon I shall be in full feather. No more news has transpired of that Wanderer. I suppose he has found his way to some of his German friends.

A propos of Spencer (you will find him mentioned a page or two before, near enough for an a propos), I was discoursing on Poetry (as one's apt to deceive onesself, and when a person is willing to *talk* of what one likes, to believe that he also likes the same: as Lovers do) with a Young Gentleman of my office who is deep read in Anacreon Moore, Lord Strangford, and the principal Modern Poets, and I happen'd to mention Epithalamiums and that I could shew him a very fine one of Spencer's. At the mention of this, my Gentleman, who is a very fine Gentleman, and is brother to the Miss Evans who Coleridge so narrowly escaped marrying, pricked up his ears and exprest great pleasure, and begged that I would give him leave to copy it: he did not care how long it was (for I objected the length), he should be very happy to see *any thing by him*. Then pausing, and looking sad, he ejaculated POOR SPENCER! I begged to know the reason of his ejaculation, thinking that Time had by this time softened down any calamities which the Bard might have endured—"Why, poor fellow!" said he "he has lost his Wife!" "Lost his Wife?" said I, "Who are you talking of?" "Why, Spencer," said he. "I've read the Monody he wrote on the occasion, and *a very pretty thing it is*." This led to an explanation (it could be delay'd no longer) that the sound Spencer, which when Poetry is talk'd of generally excites an image of an old Bard in a Ruff, and sometimes with it dim notions of Sir P. Sydney and perhaps Lord Burleigh, had raised in my Gentleman a quite

contrary image of The Honourable William Spencer, who has translated some things from the German very prettily, which are publish'd with Lady Di. Beauclerk's Designs.

Nothing like defining of Terms when we talk. What blunders might I have fallen into of quite inapplicable Criticism, but for this timely explanation.

N.B. At the beginning of *Edm.* Spencer (to prevent mistakes) I have copied from my own copy, and primarily from a book of Chalmers on Shakspear, a Sonnet of Spenser's never printed among his poems. It is curious as being manly and rather Miltonic, and as a Sonnet of Spenser's with nothing in it about Love or Knighthood. I have no room for remembrances; but I hope our doing your commission will prove we do not quite forget you.

C. L.

1 Feb., 1806.

NOTE

[Stockdale's Shakespeare was published in 1784. Pope's Quarto was published in 1725.

"*Ad ultimam horam vitæ*"—"To the last hour of life."

"Hazlitt's book about Human Action for Coleridge"—*An Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, 1805.

"A Paraphrase of the King and Queen of Hearts." This was a little book for children by Lamb, illustrated by Mulready and published by T. Hodgkins (for the Godwins) in 1806. It was discovered through this passage in this letter and is reprinted in facsimile in Vol. III. of the present edition. The title ran *The King and Queen of Hearts, with the Rogueries of the Knave who stole away the Queen's Pies.*

Coleridge had left Malta on September 21, 1805. He went to Naples, and from there to Rome in January, 1806, where he stayed until May 18.

"A propos of Spencer." This portion of the letter, owing to a mistake of Talfourd's, is usually tacked on to one dated June, 1806.

Anacreon Moore was Thomas Moore; Lord Strangford, the diplomatist, was the author of *Poems from the Portuguese of Camoëns*, 1803.

"Miss Evans." See note on page 25.

"Poor Spencer." William Robert Spencer (1769-1834), was the author of *jeux d'esprit* and poems. He is now known, if at all, by his ballad of "Bed Gellert." He married the widow of Count Spreti, and in 1804 published a book of elegies entitled "The Year of Sorrow." Spencer was among the translators of Bürger's "Leonore," his version being illustrated by Lady Diana Beauclerk (his great-aunt) in 1796. Lamb used this anecdote as a little article

in the *Reflector*, No. II., 1811, entitled "On the Ambiguities arising from Proper Names" (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 69). Lamb, however, by always spelling the real poet with a "c," did nothing towards avoiding the ambiguity!

This is the sonnet which Lamb copied into Wordsworth's Spenser from George Chalmers' *Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare-Papers* (1799), page 94:—

To the Right worshipful, my singular good *friend*, Mr. Gabriel Harvey, Doctor of the Laws:—

"Harvey, the happy above happiest men
I read: that sitting like a looker on
Of this world's stage, doest note with critique pen
The sharp dislikes of each condition:
And as one careless of suspition,
Ne fawnest for the favour of the great:
Ne fearest foolish reprehension
Of faulty men, which danger to thee threat.
But freely doest, of what thee list, entreat,
Like a great Lord of peerless liberty:
Lifting the good up to high honours seat,
And the Evil damning ever more to dy.
For life, *and* death is [are] in thy doomful writing:
So thy renowne lives ever by endighting."

Dublin: this xviij of July, 1586;
Your devoted *friend*, during life,
EDMUND SPENSER.]

LETTER 145

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[Dated at end: Feb. 19, 1806.]

DEAR H.—Godwin has just been here in his way from Johnson's. Johnson has had a fire in his house; this happened about five weeks ago; it was in the daytime, so it did not burn the house down, but did so much damage that the house must come down, to be repaired: his nephew that we met on Hampstead Hill put it out: well, this fire has put him so back, that he craves one more month before he gives you an answer.

I will certainly goad Godwin (if necessary) to go again this very day four weeks; but I am confident he will want no goading.

Three or four most capital auctions of Pictures advertised. In May, Welbore Ellis Agar's, the first private collection in England, so Holcroft says. In March, Sir George Young's in Stratford-place (where Cosway lives), and a Mr. Hulse's at Blackheath, both very capital collections, and have been announc'd for some months. Also the Marquis of Lansdowne's Pictures in March; and though inferior to mention, lastly, the Tructhsessian gallery. Don't your mouth water to be here?

T'other night Loftus called, whom we have not seen since you went before. We meditate a stroll next Wednesday, Fast-day. He happened to light upon Mr. Holcroft's Wife, and Daughter, their first visit at our house.

Your brother called last night. We keep up our intimacy. He is going to begin a large Madona and child from Mrs. H. and baby. I fear he goes astray after ignes fatui. He is a clever man. By the bye, I saw a miniature of his as far excelling any in his shew cupboard (that of your sister not excepted) as that shew cupboard excells the shew things you see in windows—an old woman—damn her name—but most superlative; he has it to clean—I'll ask him the name—but the best miniature I ever saw, equal to Cooper and them fellows. But for oil pictures!—what has he [to] do with Madonas? if the Virgin Mary were alive and visitable, he would not hazard himself in a Covent-Garden-pit-door crowd to see her. It an't his style of beauty, is it?—But he will go on painting things he ought not to paint, and not painting things he ought to paint.

Manning is not gone to China, but talks of going this Spring. God forbid!

Coleridge not heard of.

I, going to leave off smoke. In mean time am so smoky with last night's 10 Pipes, that I must leave off.

Mary begs her kind remembrances.

Pray write to us—

This is no Letter, but I supposed you grew anxious about Johnson.

N.B.—Have taken a room at 3/- a week, to be in between 5 & 8 at night, to avoid my *nocturnal* alias *knock-eternal* visitors. The first-fruits of my retirement has been a farce which goes to manager tomorrow. *Wish my ticket luck.*

God bless you, and do write.—Yours, *fumosissimus*,

C. Lamb.

Wednesday, 19 Feb., 1806.

Note

[Addressed to Hazlitt at Wem.

Johnson was the publisher whom we have already seen considering Hazlitt's abridgment of the *Light of Nature Revealed.*

Lamb was always interested in sales of pictures: the on-view days gave him some of his best opportunities of seeing good painting. The Truchsessian Picture Gallery was in New Road, opposite Portland Place. Exhibitions were held annually, the pictures being for sale.

Loftus was Tom Loftus of Wisbech, a cousin of Hazlitt.

Holcroft's wife at that time, his fourth, was Louisa Mercier, who afterwards married Lamb's friend, James Kenney, the dramatist. The daughter referred to was probably Fanny Holcroft, who subsequently wrote novels and translations.

Cooper, the miniature painter, would be Samuel Cooper (1609-1672), a connection by marriage of Pope's mother, and the painter of Cromwell and other interesting men.

Lamb's *N.B.* contains his first mention of his farce "Mr. H." We are not told where the 3s. room was situated. Possibly in the Temple.]

LETTER 146

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[? Feb. 20, 21 and 22, 1806.]

MY dear Sarah,—I have heard that Coleridge was lately going through Sicily to Rome with a party, but that, being unwell, he returned back to Naples. We think there is some mistake in this account, and that his intended journey to Rome was in his former jaunt to Naples. If you know that at that time he had any such intention, will you write instantly? for I do not know whether I ought to write to Mrs. Coleridge or not.

I am going to make a sort of promise to myself and to you, that I will write you kind of journal-like letters of the daily what-we-do matters, as they occur. This day seems to me a kind of new era in our time. It is not a birthday, nor a new-year's day, nor a leave-off-smoking day; but it is about an hour after the time of leaving you, our poor Phœnix, in the Salisbury Stage; and Charles has just left me for the first time to go to his lodgings; and I am holding a solitary consultation with myself as to the how I shall employ myself.

Writing plays, novels, poems, and all manner of such-like vapouring and vapourish schemes are floating in my head, which at the same time aches with the thought of parting from you, and is perplext at the idea of I-cannot-tell-what-about notion that I have not made you half so comfortable as I ought to have done, and a melancholy sense of the dull prospect you have before you on your return home. Then I think I will make my new gown; and now I consider the white petticoat will be better candle-light worth; and then I look at the fire, and think, if the irons was but down, I would iron my Gowns—you having put me out of conceit of mangling.

So much for an account of my own confused head; and now for yours. Returning home from the Inn, we took that to pieces, and ca[n]vassed you, as you know is our usual custom. We agreed we should miss you sadly, and that you had been, what you yourself discovered, *not at all in our way;* and although, if the Post Master should happen to open this, it would appear to him to be no great compliment, yet you, who enter so warmly into the interior of our affairs, will understand and value it, as well as what we likewise asserted, that since you have been with us you have done but one foolish thing, *vide* Pinckhorn (excuse my bad Latin, if it should chance to mean exactly contrary to what I intend). We praised you for the very friendly way in which you regarded all our whimsies, and, to use a phrase of Coleridge's, *understood us.* We had, in short, no drawback on our eulogy on your merit, except lamenting the want of respect you have to yourself—the want of a certain dignity of action, you know what I mean, which—though it only broke out in the acceptance of the old Justice's book, and was, as it were, smothered and almost extinct, while you were here —yet is so native a feeling in your mind, that you will do whatever the present moment prompts you to do, that I wish you would take that one slight offence seriously to heart, and make it a part of your daily consideration to drive this unlucky propensity, root and branch, out of your character.—Then, mercy on us, what a perfect little gentlewoman you will be!!!—

You are not yet arrived at the first stage of your journey; yet have I the sense of your absence so strong upon me, that I was really thinking what news I had to send you, and what had happened since you had left us. Truly nothing, except that Martin Burney met us in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and borrowed four-pence, of the repayment of which sum I will send you due notice.

Friday [Feb. 21, 1806].—Last night I told Charles of your matrimonial overtures from Mr. White, and of the cause of that business being at a *stand-still.* Your generous conduct in acquainting Mr. White with the vexatious affair at Malta highly pleased him. He entirely approves of it. You would be quite comforted to hear what he said on the subject.

He wishes you success, and, when Coleridge comes, will consult with him about what is best to be done. But I charge you, be most strictly cautious how you proceed yourself. Do not give Mr. W. any reason to think you indiscreet; let him return of his own accord, and keep the probability of his doing so full in your mind; so, I mean, as to regulate your whole conduct by that expectation. Do not allow yourself to see, or in any way renew your acquaintance with, William, nor do not do any other silly thing of that kind; for, you may depend upon it, he will be a kind of spy upon

you, and, if he observes nothing that he disapproves of, you will certainly hear of him again in time.

Charles is gone to finish the farce, and I am to hear it read this night. I am so uneasy between my hopes and fears of how I shall like it, that I do not know what I am doing. I need not tell you so, for before I send this I shall be able to tell you all about it. If I think it will amuse you, I will send you a copy. *The bed was very cold last night.*

Feb. 21 [? 22].—I have received your letter, and am happy to hear that your mother has been so well in your absence, which I wish had been prolonged a little, for you have been wanted to copy out the Farce, in the writing of which I made many an unlucky blunder.

The said Farce I carried (after many consultations of who was the most proper person to perform so important an office) to Wroughton, the Manager of Drury Lane. He was very civil to me; said it did not depend upon himself, but that he would put it into the Proprietors' hands, and that we should certainly have an answer from them.

I have been unable to finish this sheet before, for Charles has taken a week's holidays [from his] lodging, to rest himself after his labour, and we have talked to-night of nothing but the Farce night and day; but yesterday [I carri]ed it to Wroughton; and since it has been out of the [way, our] minds have been a little easier. I wish you had [been with] us, to have given your opinion. I have half a mind to sc[ribble] another copy, and send it you. I like it very much, and cannot help having great hopes of its success.

I would say I was very sorry for the death of Mr. White's father; but not knowing the good old gentleman, I cannot help being as well satisfied that he is gone—for his son will feel rather lonely, and so perhaps he may chance to visit again Winterslow. You so well describe your brother's grave lecturing letter, that you make me ashamed of part of mine. I would fain rewrite it, leaving out my '*sage advice;*' but if I begin another letter, something may fall out to prevent me from finishing it,—and, therefore, skip over it as well as you can; it shall be the last I ever send you.

It is well enough, when one is talking to a friend, to hedge in an odd word by way of counsel now and then; but there is something mighty irksome in its staring upon one in a letter, where one ought only to see kind words and friendly remembrances.

I have heard a vague report from the *Dawes* (the pleasant-looking young lady we called upon was Miss Daw), that Coleridge returned back to Naples: they are to make further enquiries, and let me know the particulars. We have seen little or nothing of Manning since you went. Your friend [George] Burnett calls as usual, for Charles to *point out something for him.* I miss you

sadly, and but for the fidget I have been in about the Farce, I should have missed you still more. I am sorry you cannot get your money, continue to tell us all your perplexities, and do not mind being called Widow Blackacre.

Say all in your mind about your *Lover*, now Charles knows of it; he will be as anxious to hear as me. All the time we can spare from talking of the characters and plot of the Farce, we talk of you. I have got a fresh bottle of Brandy to-day: if you were here, you should have a glass, *three parts brandy*—so you should. I bought a pound of bacon to-day, not so good as yours. I wish the little caps were finished. I am glad the Medicines and the Cordials bore the fatigue of their journey so well. I promise you I will write often, and *not mind the postage*. God bless you. Charles does *not* send his love, because he is *not* here.

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

Write as often as ever you can. Do not work too hard.

Note

[Mr. Hazlitt dates this letter April, thinking that Mary Lamb's pen slipped when she wrote February 21 half-way through. But I think February must be right; because (1) Miss Stoddart has only just left, and Lamb tells Hazlitt in January that she is staying a week or so longer: April would make this time three months; and (2) Lamb has told Hazlitt on February 19 that his farce is finished.

Coleridge left Malta for Rome on September 21, 1805. He was probably at Naples from October, 1805, to the end of January, 1806, when he went to Rome, remaining there until May 18. Writing to Mrs. Clarkson on March 2, 1806, Dorothy Wordsworth quotes from a letter written on February 25 by Mary Lamb to Mrs. S. T. Coleridge and containing this passage: "My Brother has received a letter from Stoddart dated December 26, in which he tells him that Coleridge was then at Naples. We have also heard from a Mr. Dawe that a friend of his had received a letter of the same date, which mentioned Coleridge having been lately travelling towards Rome with a party of gentlemen; but that he changed his mind and returned back to Naples. Stoddart says nothing more than that he was driven to Naples in consequence of the French having taken possession of Trieste." (See the *Athenæum*, January 23, 1904.)

"*Vide* Pinckhorn." I cannot explain this, unless a Justice Pinckhorn had ogled Sarah Stoddart and offered her a present of a

book. Mary Lamb, by the way, some years later taught Latin to William Hazlitt, Junior, Sarah's son.

Martin Charles Burney, the son of Captain Burney, born in 1788, a devoted admirer of the Lambs to the end. He was now only eighteen. We shall often meet him again.

Mr. White was not Lamb's friend James White.

Winterslow, in Wiltshire, about six miles from Salisbury, was a small property belonging to Sarah Stoddart.

"Widow Blackacre." In Wycherley's "Plain Dealer:" a busybody and persistent litigant.]

LETTER 147

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[March, 1806.]

MY dear Sarah,—No intention of forfeiting my promise, but mere want of time, has prevented me from continuing my *journal*. You seem pleased with the long, stupid one I sent, and, therefore, I shall certainly continue to write at every opportunity. The reason why I have not had any time to spare, is because Charles has given himself some hollidays after the hard labour of finishing his farce, and, therefore, I have had none of the evening leisure I promised myself. Next week he promises to go to work again. I wish he may happen to hit upon some new plan, to his mind, for another farce: when once begun, I do not fear his perseverance, but the hollidays he has allowed himself, I fear, will unsettle him. I look forward to next week with the same kind of anxiety I did to the first entrance at the new lodging. We have had, as you know, so many teasing anxieties of late, that I have got a kind of habit of foreboding that we shall never be comfortable, and that he will never settle to work: which I know is wrong, and which I will try with all my might to overcome—for certainly, if I could but see things as they really are, our prospects are considerably improved since the memorable day of Mrs. Fenwick's last visit. I have heard nothing of that good lady, or of the Fells, since you left us.

We have been visiting a little—to Norris's, to Godwin's; and last night we did not come home from Captain Burney's till two o'clock: the *Saturday night* was changed to *Friday*, because Rickman could not be there to-night. We had the best *tea things*, and the litter all cleared away, and every thing as handsome as possible—Mrs. Rickman being of the party. Mrs. Rickman is much *increased in size* since we saw her last, and the alteration

in her strait shape wonderfully improves her. Phillips was there, and Charles had a long batch of Cribbage with him: and, upon the whole, we had the most chearful evening I have known there a long time. To-morrow, we dine at Holcroft's. These things rather fatigue me; but I look for a quiet week next week, and hope for better times. We have had Mrs. Brooks and all the Martins, and we have likewise been there; so that I seem to have been in a continual bustle lately. I do not think Charles cares so much for the Martins as he did, which is a fact you will be glad to hear—though you must not name them when you write: always remember, when I tell you any thing about them, not to mention their names in return.

We have had a letter from your brother, by the same mail as yours, I suppose; he says he does not mean to return till summer, and that is all he says about himself; his letter being entirely filled with a long story about Lord Nelson—but nothing more than what the newspapers have been full of, such as his last words, &c. Why does he tease you with so much *good advice?* is it merely to fill up his letters as he filled ours with Lord Nelson's exploits? or has any new thing come out against you? has he discovered Mr. Curse-a-rat's correspondence? I hope you will not write to that *news-sending* gentleman any more. I promised never more to give my *advice*, but one may be allowed to *hope* a little; and I also hope you will have something to tell me soon about Mr. W[hite]: have you seen him yet? I am sorry to hear your Mother is not better, but I am in a hoping humour just now, and I cannot help hoping that we shall all see happier days. The bells are just now ringing for the taking of the *Cape of Good Hope*.

I have written to Mrs. Coleridge to tell her that her husband is at Naples; your brother slightly named his being there, but he did not say that he had heard from him himself. Charles is very busy at the Office; he will be kept there to-day till seven or eight o'Clock: and he came home very *smoky and drinky* last night; so that I am afraid a hard day's work will not agree very well with him.

O dear! what shall I say next? Why this I will say next, that I wish you was with me; I have been eating a mutton chop all alone, and I have been just looking in the pint porter pot, which I find quite empty, and yet I am still very dry. If you was with me, we would have a glass of brandy and water; but it is quite impossible to drink brandy and water by oneself; therefore, I must wait with patience till the kettle boils. I hate to drink tea alone, it is worse than dining alone. We have got a fresh cargo of biscuits from Captain Burney's. I have——

March 14.—Here I was interrupted; and a long, tedious interval has intervened, during which I have had neither time nor

inclination to write a word. The Lodging—that pride and pleasure of your heart and mine—is given up, *and here he is again*—Charles, I mean—as unsettled and as undetermined as ever. When he went to the poor lodging, after the hollidays I told you he had taken, he could not endure the solitariness of them, and I had no rest for the sole of my foot till I promised to believe his solemn protestations that he could and would write as well at home as there. Do you believe this?

I have no power over Charles: he will do—what he will do. But I ought to have some little influence over myself. And therefore I am most manfully resolving to turn over a new leaf with my own mind. Your visit to us, though not a very comfortable one to yourself, has been of great use to me. I set you up in my fancy as a kind of *thing* that takes an interest in my concerns; and I hear you talking to me, and arguing the matter very learnedly, when I give way to despondency. You shall hear a good account of me, and the progress I make in altering my fretful temper to a calm and quiet one. It is but being once thorowly convinced one is wrong, to make one resolve to do so no more; and I know my dismal faces have been almost as great a drawback upon Charles's comfort, as his feverish, teazing ways have been upon mine. Our love for each other has been the torment of our lives hitherto. I am most seriously intending to bend the whole force of my mind to counteract this, and I think I see some prospect of success.

Of Charles ever bringing any work to pass at home, I am very doubtful; and of the farce succeeding, I have little or no hope; but if I could once get into the way of being chearful myself, I should see an easy remedy in leaving town and living cheaply, almost wholly alone; but till I do find we really are comfortable alone, and by ourselves, it seems a dangerous experiment. We shall certainly stay where we are till after next Christmas; and in the mean time, as I told you before, all my whole thoughts shall be to *change* myself into just such a chearful soul as you would be in a lone house, with no companion but your brother, if you had nothing to vex you—nor no means of wandering after *Curse-a-rats*.

Do write soon: though I write all about myself, I am thinking all the while of you, and I am uneasy at the length of time it seems since I heard from you. Your Mother, and Mr. White, is running continually in my head; and this *second winter* makes me think how cold, damp, and forlorn your solitary house will feel to you. I would your feet were perched up again on our fender.

Manning is not yet gone. Mrs. Holcroft is brought to bed. Mrs. Reynolds has been confined at home with illness, but is recovering. God bless you.

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

NOTE

["Norris's"—Randal Norris, sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple, whose wife, *née* Faint, came from Widford, where she had known Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field.

Captain Burney's whist parties, in Little James Street, Pimlico, were, as a rule, on Saturdays. Later Lamb established a Wednesday party.

Of Mrs. Brooks I have no knowledge; nor of him whom Mary Lamb called Mr. Curse-a-rat.

"The *Cape of Good Hope*." The Cape of Good Hope, having been taken by the English in 1795 from the Dutch, and restored to them at the Peace of Amiens in 1802, had just been retaken by the English.

"Mrs. Holcroft is brought to bed." The child was Louisa, afterwards Mrs. Badams.]

LETTER 148

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

March, 1806.

DEAR Rickman,—I send you some papers about a salt-water soap, for which the inventor is desirous of getting a parliamentary reward, like Dr. Jenner. Whether such a project be feasible, I mainly doubt, taking for granted the equal utility. I should suppose the usual way of paying such projectors is by patents and contracts. The patent, you see, he has got. A contract he is about with the Navy Board. Meantime, the projector is hungry. Will you answer me two questions, and return them with the papers as soon as you can? Imprimis, is there any chance of success in application to Parliament for a reward? Did you ever hear of the invention? You see its benefits and saving to the nation (always the first motive with a true projector) are feelingly set forth: the last paragraph but one of the estimate, in enumerating the shifts poor seamen are put to, even approaches to the pathetic. But, agreeing to all he says, is there the remotest chance of Parliament giving the projector anything; and *when* should application be made, now or after a report (if he can get it) from the navy board? Secondly, let the infeasibility be as great as you will, you will oblige me by telling me the way of introducing such an application to Parliament, without buying over a majority of members, which is totally out of projector's

power. I vouch nothing for the soap myself; for I always wash in *fresh water*, and find it answer tolerably well for all purposes of cleanliness; nor do I know the projector; but a relation of mine has put me on writing to you, for whose parliamentary knowledge he has great veneration.

P.S. The Capt. and Mrs. Burney and Phillips take their chance at cribbage here on Wednesday. Will you and Mrs. R. join the party? Mary desires her compliments to Mrs. R., and joins in the invitation.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Rickman now held the post of private secretary to the Speaker, Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester.

Captain Burney we have already met. His wife, Sarah Burney, was, there is good reason to suppose, in Lamb's mind when he wrote the *Elia* essay "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist." Phillips was either Colonel Phillips, a retired officer of marines, who had sailed with Burney and Captain Cook, had known Dr. Johnson, and had married Burney's sister; or Ned Phillips (Rickman's Secretary) mentioned in the note to Letter 483, on page 838.]

LETTER 149

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

March 15, 1806.

DEAR H.—I am a little surprised at no letter from you. This day week, to wit, Saturday, the 8th of March, 1806, I booked off by the Wem coach, Bull and Mouth Inn, directed to *you*, at the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt's, Wem, Shropshire, a parcel containing, besides a book, &c., a rare print, which I take to be a Titian; begging the said W. H. to acknowledge the receipt thereof; which he not having done, I conclude the said parcel to be lying at the inn, and may be lost; for which reason, lest you may be a Wales-hunting at this instant, I have authorised any of your family, whosoever first gets this, to open it, that so precious a parcel may not moulder away for want of looking after. What do you in Shropshire when so many fine pictures are a-going, a-going every day in London? Monday I visit the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in Berkeley Square. Catalogue 2s. 6d. Leonardos in plenty. Some other day this week I go to see Sir Wm. Young's, in Stratford

Place. Hulse's, of Blackheath, are also to be sold this month; and in May, the first private collection in Europe, Welbore Ellis Agar's. And there are you, perverting Nature in lying landscapes, filched from old rusty Titians, such as I can scrape up here to send you, with an additament from Shropshire Nature thrown in to make the whole look unnatural. I am afraid of your mouth watering when I tell you that Manning and I got into Angerstein's on Wednesday. *Mon Dieu!* Such Claudes! Four Claudes bought for more than £10,000 (those who talk of Wilson being equal to Claude are either mainly ignorant or stupid); one of these was perfectly miraculous. What colours short of *bonâ fide* sunbeams it could be painted in, I am not earthly colourman enough to say; but I did not think it had been in the possibility of things. Then, a music-piece by Titian—a thousand-pound picture—five figures standing behind a piano, the sixth playing; none of the heads, as M. observed, indicating great men, or affecting it, but so sweetly disposed; all leaning separate ways, but so easy—like a flock of some divine shepherd; the colouring, like the economy of the picture, so sweet and harmonious—as good as Shakspeare's "Twelfth Night,"—*almost*, that is. It will give you a love of order, and cure you of restless, fidgetty passions for a week after—more musical than the music which it would, but cannot, yet in a manner *does*, show. I have no room for the rest. Let me say, Angerstein sits in a room—his study (only that and the library are shown)—when he writes a common letter, as I am doing, surrounded with twenty pictures worth £60,000. What a luxury! Apicius and Heliogabalus, hide your diminished heads!

Yours, my dear painter, C. Lamb.

Note

[Angerstein's was the house of John Julius Angerstein (1735-1823) the financier, in Pall Mall. He had a magnificent collection of pictures, £60,000 worth of which were bought on his death by the nation, to form the nucleus of our National Gallery. A portrait of Angerstein by Lawrence hangs there. The Titian of which Lamb speaks is now attributed to the School of Titian. It is called "A Concert," and is No. 3 in the National Gallery catalogue. See opposite page. Angerstein's Claudes are also in the National Gallery, Nos. 2, 5, 12, 14 and 30.]

LETTER 150

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

May 10, 1806.

MY dear Manning—I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, and when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony, and then ——. Martin Burney *took me out* a walking that evening, and we talked of Mister Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you; and at twelve o'Clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisa from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have staid so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! Me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr. Daw, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little Mandarin for our mantle-piece, as a companion to the Child I am going to purchase at the Museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspear's plays, to be made into Children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, 'The Tempest,' 'Winter's Tale,' 'Midsummer Night,' 'Much Ado,' 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and 'Cymbeline:' 'The Merchant of Venice' is in forwardness. I have done 'Othello' and 'Macbeth,' and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It is to bring in 60 guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous Pagan anthropophagi. Quam homo homini præstat! but then, perhaps, you'll get murder'd, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath

their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. O Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years you talk of, maybe ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstance may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I daresay all this is Hum, and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

One thing more. When you get to Canton, you will most likely see a young friend of mine, Inspector of Teas, named Ball. He is a very good fellow and I should like to have my name talked of in China. Give my kind remembrances to the same Ball.

Good bye. C. L.

NOTE

[Addressed to "Mr. Manning, Passenger on Board the *Thames*, East Indiaman, Portsmouth."

Manning sailed for China this month. He did not return to England until 1817. His nominal purpose was to practise medicine there, not to spread Christianity, as Lamb suggests—probably in fun.

This is Manning's reply to Lamb's letter:—

"DEAR LAMB—As we are not sailed yet, and I have a few minutes, why should not I give you a line to say that I received your kind letter yesterday, and shall read it again before I have done with it. I am sorry I had not time to call on Mary, but I did not even call on my own Father, and he's 70 and loves me like a Father. I don't know that you can do any thing for me at the India House: if you hear any thing there about me, communicate it to Mr. Crabtree, 13, Newgate Street. I am not dead,

nor dying—some people go into Yorkshire for four [years], and I have no currant jelly aboard. Tell Holcroft I received his kind letter.

"T. MANNING for ever."

"*Quam homo homini præstat.*" Terence, "Eunuchus," II., 2, 1, "Di immortales! homini homo quid præstat!"—"Immortal gods! what a difference there is between one man and another!"

See Appendix II., page 969, for addition to this letter.]

LETTER 151

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[Mr. W. C. Hazlitt dates: June 2, 1806.]

MY dear Sarah,—You say truly that I have sent you too many make-believe letters. I do not mean to serve you so again, if I can help it. I have been very ill for some days past with the toothache. Yesterday, I had it drawn; and I feel myself greatly relieved, but far from easy, for my head and my jaws still ache; and, being unable to do any business, I would wish to write you a long letter, to atone for my former offences; but I feel so languid, that I am afraid wishing is all I can do.

I am sorry you are so worried with business; and I am still more sorry for your sprained ancle. You ought not to walk upon it. What is the matter between you and your good-natured maid you used to boast of? and what the devil is the matter with your Aunt? You say she is discontented. You must bear with them as well as you can; for, doubtless, it is you[r] poor Mother's teazing that puts you all out of sorts. I pity you from my heart.

We cannot come to see you this summer, nor do I think it advisable to come and incommode you, when you for the same expence could come to us. Whenever you feel yourself disposed to run away from your troubles, come up to us again. I wish it was not such a long, expensive journey, then you could run backwards and forwards every month or two.

I am very sorry you still hear nothing from Mr. White. I am afraid that is all at an end. What do you intend to do about Mr. Turner?

I believe Mr. Rickman is well again, but I have not been able to get out lately to enquire, because of my toothache. Louisa Martin is quite well again.

William Hazlitt, the brother of him you know, is in town. I believe you have heard us say we like him? He came in good time; for the loss of Manning made Charles very dull, and he likes

Hazlitt better than any body, except Manning. My toothache has moped Charles to death: you know how he hates to see people ill.

Mrs. Reynolds has been this month past at Deptford, so that I never know when Monday comes. I am glad you have got your Mother's pension.

My *Tales* are to be published in separate story-books; I mean, in single stories, like the children's little shilling books. I cannot send you them in Manuscript, because they are all in the Godwins' hands; but one will be published very soon, and then you shall have it *all in print*. I go on very well, and have no doubt but I shall always be able to hit upon some such kind of job to keep going on. I think I shall get fifty pounds a year at the lowest calculation; but as I have not yet seen any *money* of my own earning, for we do not expect to be paid till Christmas, I do not feel the good fortune, that has so unexpectedly befallen me, half so much as I ought to do. But another year, no doubt, I shall perceive it.

When I write again, you will hear tidings of the farce, for Charles is to go in a few days to the Managers to enquire about it. But that must now be a next-year's business too, even if it does succeed; so it's all looking forward, and no prospect of present gain. But that's better than no hopes at all, either for present or future times.

Charles has written Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, and has begun Hamlet; you would like to see us, as we often sit, writing on one table (but not on one cushion sitting), like Hermia and Helena in the Midsummer's Night's Dream; or, rather, like an old literary Darby and Joan: I taking snuff, and he groaning all the while, and saying he can make nothing of it, which he always says till he has finished, and then he finds out he has made something of it.

If I tell you that you Widow-Blackacreise, you must tell me I Tale-ise, for my *Tales* seem to be all the subject matter I write about; and when you see them, you will think them poor little baby-stories to make such a talk about; but I have no news to send, nor nothing, in short, to say, that is worth paying two pence for. I wish I could get franks, then I should not care how short or stupidly I wrote.

Charles smokes still, and will smoke to the end of the chapter.

Martin [Burney] has just been here. My Tales (*again*) and Charles's Farce has made the boy mad to turn Author; and he has written a Farce, and he has made the Winter's Tale into a story; but what Charles says of himself is really true of Martin, for *he can make nothing at all of it:* and I have been talking very eloquently this morning, to convince him that nobody can write farces, &c., under thirty years of age. And so I suppose he will go home and new model his farce.

What is Mr. Turner? and what is likely to come of him? and how do you like him? and what do you intend to do about it? I almost wish you to remain single till your Mother dies, and then come and live with us; and we would either get you a husband, or teach you how to live comfortably without. I think I should like to have you always to the end of our lives living with us; and I do not know any reason why that should not be, except for the great fancy you seem to have for marrying, which after all is but a hazardous kind of an affair: but, however, do as you like; every man knows best what pleases himself best.

I have known many single men I should have liked in my life (*if it had suited them*) for a husband: but very few husbands have I ever wished was mine, which is rather against the state in general; but one never is disposed to envy wives their good husbands. So much for marrying—but however, get married, if you can.

I say we shall not come and see you, and I feel sure we shall not: but, if some sudden freak was to come into our wayward heads, could you at all manage?—Your Mother we should not mind, but I think still it would be so vastly inconvenient.—I am certain we shall not come, and yet *you* may tell me, when you write, if it would be horribly inconvenient if we did; and do not tell me any lies, but say truly whether you would rather we did or not.

God bless you, my dearest Sarah! I wish, for your sake, I could have written a very amusing letter; but do not scold, for my head aches sadly. Don't mind my headach, for before you get this it will be well, being only from the pains of my jaws and teeth. Farewel.

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

Note

[This letter contains the first mention to Sarah Stoddart of William Hazlitt, who was shortly to put an end to the claims both of Mr. White and Mr. Turner.

The *Tales from Shakespear*, although mainly Mary Lamb's book, did not bear her name for many years, not until after her brother's death. Her connection with it was, however, made public in more than one literary year-book of her day. Originally they were to be unsigned, but Godwin "cheated" Lamb into putting a name to them (see Letter 161). The single stories, which Mrs. Godwin issued at sixpence each, are now excessively rare. The ordinary first edition in two volumes is a valuable possession, much desired by collectors.]

LETTER 152

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. June 26, 1806.]

DEAR Wordsworth—We got the six pounds safe in your sister's letters—are pleased, you may be sure, with the good news of Mrs. W.—hope all is well over by this time. "A fine boy!—have you any more? one more and a girl—poor copies of me" vide MR. H. a farce which the Proprietors have done me the honor—but I will set down Mr. Wroughton's own words. N.B. the ensuing letter was sent in answer to one which I wrote begging to know if my piece had any chance, as I might make alterations, &c. I writing on the Monday, there comes this letter on the Wednesday. Attend.

(*Copy of a Letter from Mr. Rd. Wroughton*)

Sir, Your Piece of Mr. H—I am desired to say, is accepted at Drury Lane Theatre, by the Proprietors, and, if agreeable to you, will be brought forwards when the proper opportunity serves—the Piece shall be sent to you for your Alterations in the course of a few days, as the same is not in my Hands but with the Proprietors.

(dated)
66 Gower St.,
Wednesday
June 11, 1806.

I am Sir,
Your obedient sert.,
Rd. WROUGHTON.

On the following Sunday Mr. Tobin comes. The scent of a manager's letter brought him. He would have gone further any day on such a business. I read the letter to him. He deems it authentic and peremptory. Our conversation naturally fell upon pieces—different sorts of pieces—what is the best way of offering a piece—how far the caprice of managers is an obstacle in the way of a piece—how to judge of the merits of a piece—how long a piece may remain in the hands of the managers before it is acted—and my piece—and your piece—and my poor brother's piece—my poor brother was all his life endeavouring to get a piece accepted—

I am not sure that when *my poor Brother* bequeathed the care of his pieces to Mr. James Tobin he did not therein convey a legacy which in some measure mollified the otherwise first stupefactions of grief. It can't be expected that the present Earl Nelson passes all his time in watering the laurels of the Admiral with Right Reverend Tears. Certainly he steals a fine day now and then to plot how to lay out the grounds and mansion at Burnham most

suitably to the late Earl's taste, if he had lived, and how to spend the hundred thousand pound parliament has given him in erecting some little neat monument to his memory.

MR.H. I wrote that in mere wantonness of triumph. Have nothing more to say about it. The Managers I thank my stars have decided its merits for ever. They are the best judges of pieces, and it would be insensible in me to affect a false modesty after the very flattering letter which I have received and the ample—

I think this will be as good a pattern for Orders as I can think on. A little thin flowery border round, neat not gaudy, and the Drury Lane Apollo with the harp at the top. Or shall I have no Apollo?—simply nothing? Or perhaps the Comic Muse?

[*Here came the picture of the box ticket. See opposite page.*]

The same form, only I think without the Apollo, will serve for the pit and galleries. I think it will be best to write my name at full length; but then if I give away a great many, that will be tedious. Perhaps *Ch. Lamb* will do. BOXES now I think on it I'll have in Capitals. The rest in a neat Italian hand. Or better perhaps, Boxes, in old English character, like Madoc or Thalaba?

I suppose you know poor Mountague has lost his wife. That has been the reason for my sending off all we have got of yours separately. I thought it a bad time to trouble him. The Tea 25 lb. in 5 5 lb. Papers, two sheets to each, with the chocolate which we were afraid Mrs. W. would want, comes in one Box and the Hats in a small one. I booked them off last night by the Kendal waggon. There comes with this letter (no, it comes a day or two earlier) a Letter for you from the Doctor at Malta, about Coleridge, just received. Nothing of certainty, you see, only that he is not at Malta. We supt with the Clarksons one night—Mrs. Clarkson pretty well. Mr. C. somewhat fidgety, but a good man. The Baby has been on a visit to Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Novellist and morals-trainer, but is returned. [*A short passage omitted here.*]

Mary is just stuck fast in All's Well that Ends Well. She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boy's clothes. She begins to think Shakspear must have wanted Imagination. I to encourage her, for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work, flatter her with telling her how well such a play and such a play is done. But she is stuck fast and I have been obliged to promise to assist her. To do this it will be necessary to leave off Tobacco. But I had some thoughts of doing that before,

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. GORDON WORDSWORTH

for I sometimes think it does not agree with me. W. Hazlitt is in Town. I took him to see a very pretty girl professedly, where there were two young girls—the very head and sum of the Girlery was two young girls—they neither laughed nor sneered nor giggled nor whispered—but they were young girls—and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a thing as Youth and Beauty, till he tore me away before supper in perfect misery and owned he could not bear young girls. They drove him mad. So I took him home to my old Nurse, where he recover'd perfect tranquillity. Independent of this, and as I am not a young girl myself, he is a great acquisition to us. He is, rather imprudently, I think, printing a political pamphlet on his own account, and will have to pay for the paper, &c. The first duty of an Author, I take it, is never to pay anything. But non cuivis attigit adire Corinthum. The Managers I thank my stars have settled that question for me.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Wordsworth's third child, Thomas, who did not grow up, was born June 16, 1806.

"A fine boy!" The quotation is from Mr. H.'s soliloquy after the discovery of his name:—

"No son of mine shall exist, to bear my ill-fated name. No nurse come chuckling, to tell me it is a boy. No midwife, leering at me from under the lids of professional gravity. I dreamed of caudle. (*Sings in a melancholy tone*) Lullaby, Lullaby,—hush-a-by-baby—how like its papa it is!—(*makes motions as if he was nursing*). And then, when grown up, 'Is this your son, sir?' 'Yes, sir, a poor copy of me,—a sad young dog!—just what his father was at his age,—I have four more at home.' Oh! oh! oh!"

Tobin was James Tobin, whom we have already met, brother of the late dramatist, John Tobin.

Poor Mountague would be Basil Montagu, whose second wife had just died. He married afterwards Anne Skepper, whom Lamb came to know well, and of whom he speaks in his *Elia* essay "Oxford in the Vacation."

The Doctor was Dr. Stoddart. Coleridge had left Malta some months before, as we have seen. He had also left Rome and was in some foreign town unknown, probably not far from Leghorn, whence he sailed for England in the following month, reaching Portsmouth in August.

The Baby was Mrs. Godwin, and Charlotte Smith was the poetess (of great fame in her day, but now forgotten), who was then living

at Tilford, near Farnham, in Surrey. She died in the following October. The passage which I have, with extreme reluctance, omitted, refers to the physical development of the two ladies. Lamb was writing just then less for Wordsworth than Antiquity.

Hazlitt's political pamphlet was his *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806.

"*Non cuivis attigit adire Corinthum.*" Horace, Epist. I., 17, 36, "Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum"—"It is not the lot of every man to visit Corinth."]

LETTER 153

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date. ? Begun on Friday, July 4, 1806.]

CHARLES and Hazlitt are going to Sadler's Wells, and I am amusing myself in their absence with reading a manuscript of Hazlitt's; but have laid it down to write a few lines, to tell you how we are going on. Charles has begged a month's hollidays, of which this is the first day, and they are all to be spent at home. We thank you for your kind invitations, and were half-inclined to come down to you; but after mature deliberation, and many wise consultations, such as you know we often hold, we came to the resolution of staying quietly at home: and during the hollidays we are both of us to set stoutly to work and finish the Tales, six of them being yet to do. We thought, if we went anywhere and left them undone, they would lay upon our minds; and that when we returned, we should feel unsettled, and our money all spent besides: and next summer we are to be very rich, and then we can afford a long journey some where, I will not say to Salisbury, because I really think it is better for you to come to us; but of that we will talk another time.

The best news I have to send you is, that the Farce is accepted. That is to say, the manager has written to say it shall be brought out when an opportunity serves. I hope that it may come out by next Christmas: you must come and see it the first night; for if it succeeds, it will be a great pleasure to you, and if it should not, we shall want your consolation. So you must come.

I shall soon have done my work, and know not what to begin next. Now, will you set your brains to work and invent a story, either for a short child's story, or a long one that would make a kind of Novel, or a Story that would make a play. Charles wants

me to write a play, but I am not over anxious to set about it; but seriously will you draw me out a skeleton of a story, either from memory of any thing that you have read, or from your own invention, and I will fill it up in some way or other.

The reason I have not written so long is, that I worked, and worked, in hopes to get through my task before the hollidays began; but at last I was not able, for Charles was forced to get them now, or he could not have had any at all: and having picked out the best stories first, these latter ones take more time, being more perplext and unmanageable. But however I hope soon to tell you that they are quite completed. I have finished one to-day which teazed me more than all the rest put together. The[y] sometimes plague me as bad as your *Lovers* do you. How do you go on, and how many new ones have you had lately?

I met Mrs. Fenwick at Mrs. Holcroft's the other day; she loo[ked very] placid and smiling, but I was so disconcerted that I hardly knew how to sit upon my chair. She invited us to come and see her, but we did not invite her in return; and nothing at all was said in an explanatory sort: so that matter rests at present.

Mrs. Rickman continues very ill—so ill, that there are no hopes of her recovery—for which I am very sorry indeed.

I am sorry you are altogether so uncomfortable; I shall be glad to hear you are settled at Salisbury: that must be better than living in a lone house, companionless as you are. I wish you could afford to bring your Mother up to London; but that is quite impossible.

Your brother wrote a letter a week ago (which passed through our hands) to Wordsworth, to tell him all he knew of Coleridge; but as he had not heard from C. for some time, there was nothing in the letter we did not know before.

Thanks for your brother's letters. I preserve them very carefully, and you shall have them (as the Manager says) when opportunity serves.

Mrs. Wordsworth is brought to bed; and I ought to write to Miss Wordsworth to thank her for the information, but I suppose I shall defer it till another child is coming. I do so hate writing letters. I wish all my friends would come and live in town. Charles has been telling me even it is better [than] two months that he ought to write to your brother. [It is not] my dislike to writing letters that prevents my [writing] to you, but sheer want of time, I assure you, because [I know] you care not how stupidly I write, so as you do but [hear at the] time what we are about.

Let me hear from you soon, and do let me hear some [good news,] and don't let me hear of your walking with sprained ancles again; no business is an excuse for making yourself lame.

I hope your poor Mother is better, and Aunty and Maid jog on pretty well; remember me to them all in due form and order. Charles's love, and our best wishes that all your little busy affairs may come to a prosperous conclusion.

Yours affectionately,

Friday evening. M. Lamb.

[*Added later*:—]

They (Hazlitt and Charles) came home from Sadler's Wells so dismal and dreary dull on Friday, that I gave them both a good scolding—*quite a setting to rights*; and I think it has done some good, for Charles has been very chearful ever since. I begin to hope the *home hollidays* will go on very well. Mrs. Rickman is better. Rickman we saw at Captain Burney's for the first time since her illness last night.

Write directly, for I am uneasy about your *Lovers*; I wish something was settled. God bless you.

Once more, yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

Sunday morning [*July 6, or more probably* 13].—I did not put this in the post, hoping to be able to write a less dull letter to you this morning; but I have been prevented, so it shall go as it is. I am in good spirits just at this present time, for Charles has been reading over the *Tale* I told you plagued me so much, and he thinks it one of the very best: it is All's Well that Ends Well. You must not mind the many wretchedly dull letters I have sent you; for, indeed, I cannot help it, my mind is so *dry* always after poring over my work all day. But it will soon be over.

I am cooking a shoulder of Lamb (Hazlitt dines with us); it will be ready at two o'Clock, if you can pop in and eat a bit with us.

Note

[The programme at Sadler's Wells on July 4, 1806, was: "Aquatic Theatre, Sadler's Wells. A new dance called Grist and Puff, or the Highland Fling. The admired comic pantomime, Harlequin and the Water Kelpe. New melodramatic Romance, The Invisible Ring; or, The Water Monstre and Fire Spectre." The author of both was Mr. C. Dibdin, Jun. "Real water."

Mary Lamb's next work, after the *Tales from Shakespear*, was *Mrs. Leicester's School*. Charles Lamb meanwhile was preparing his *Dramatic Specimens* and *Adventures of Ulysses*.

Mrs. Rickman did not die then. She lived until 1836.]

LETTER 154

MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. August 29, 1806.]

MY dear Miss Wordsworth—After I had put my letter in the post yesterday I was uneasy all the night because of some few expressions relative to poor Coleridge—I mean, in saying I wished your brother would come to town and that I wished your brother would consult Mr. Southey. I am very sure your brother will take no step in consequence of any foolish advice that I can give him, so far I am easy, but the painful reflections I have had during a sleepless night has induced me to write merely to quiet myself, because I have felt ever since, that in the present situation of Coleridge, returned after an absence of two years, and feeling a reluctance to return to his family, I ought not to throw in the weight of a hair in advising you or your Brother, and that I ought not to have so much as named to you his reluctance to return to Keswick, for so little is it in my power to calculate on his actions that perhaps in a few days he may be on his return home.

You, my dear friend, will perfectly understand me that I do not mean that I might not freely say to you anything that is upon my mind—but [the] truth is, my poor mind is so weak that I never dare trust my own judgement in anything: what I think one hour a fit of low spirits makes me unthink the next. Yesterday I wrote, anxiously longing for Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Southey to endeavour to bring Mrs. C. to consent to a separation, and to day I think of the letter I received from Mrs. Coleridge, telling me, as joyful news, that her husband is arrived, and I feel it very wrong in me even in the remotest degree to do anything to prevent her seeing that husband—she and her husband being the only people who ought to be concerned in the affair.

All that I have said, or meant to say, you will perfectly understand, it being nothing more than to beg you will consider both my letter to day and yesterday as if you had not read either, they being both equally the effect of low spirits, brought on by the fatigue of Coleridge's conversation and the anxious care even to misery which I have felt since he has been here, that something could be done to make such an admirable creature happy. Nor has, I assure you, Mrs. Coleridge been without her full share in adding to my uneasiness. They say she grows fat and is very happy—and people say I grow fat and look happy—

It is foolish to teize you about my anxieties, you will feel quite enough on the subject yourself, and your little ones are all ill, and

no doubt you are fatigued with nursing, but I could not help writing to day, to tell you how what I said yesterday has vext and worried me. Burn both these foolish letters and do not name the subject of them, because Charles will either blame me for having written something improper or he will laugh at me for my foolish fears about nothing.

Though I wish you not to take notice of what I have said, yet I shall rejoice to see a letter from you, and I hope, when you have half an hour's leisure, to see a line from you. We have not heard from Coleridge since he went out of town, but I dare say you have heard either from him or Mrs. Clarkson.

I remain my dear friend
Yours most affectionately
M. Lamb.

Friday [August 29].

Note

[For the full understanding of Mary Lamb's letter it is necessary to read Coleridge's Life and his Letters. Coleridge on his return from abroad reached London August 17, 1806, and took up his quarters with the Lambs on the following day. He once more joined Stuart, then editing the *Courier*, but much of his old enthusiasm had gone. In Mr. Dykes Campbell's words:—

Almost his first words to Stuart were: "I am literally afraid, even to cowardice, to ask for any person, or of any person." Spite of the friendliest and most unquestioning welcome from all most dear to him, it was the saddest of home-comings, for the very sympathy held out with both hands induced only a bitter, hopeless feeling of remorse—a

"Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain;—
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain;—"

of broken promises,—promises to friends and promises to himself; and above all, sense of a will paralysed—dead perhaps, killed by his own hand.

Coleridge remained at Lamb's at any rate until August 29, afterwards taking rooms in the *Courier* office at 348 Strand. Meanwhile his reluctance to meet or communicate with his wife was causing his friends much concern, none more so than Mary Lamb, who wrote at least two letters filled with anxious sympathy to Dorothy Wordsworth on the subject, asking for the mediation of Wordsworth or Southey. Her earlier letter is missing.

To quote Mr. Dykes Campbell again:—

On September 16—just a month after his landing—he wrote his first letter to his wife, to say that he might be expected at Greta Hall on the 29th.

Before this, Wordsworth had informed Sir George Beaumont that Coleridge "dare not go home, he recoils so much from the thought of domesticating with Mrs. Coleridge, with whom, though on many accounts he much respects her, he is so miserable that he dare not encounter it. What a deplorable thing! I have written to him to say that if he does not come down immediately I must insist upon seeing him some-where. If he appoints London I shall go.

I believe if anything good is to be done for him it must be done by me."

It was this letter of Wordsworth, doubtless, which drew Coleridge to the North. Dorothy's letter to Lady Beaumont, written on receipt of the announcement of Coleridge's home-coming, goes copiously and minutely into the reasons for the estrangement between the poet and his wife. Miss Wordsworth still had hopes of an improvement. "Poor soul!" she writes, "he had a struggle of many years, striving to bring Mrs. C. to a change of temper, and something like communion with him in his enjoyments. He is now, I trust, effectually convinced that he has no power of that sort," and may, she thinks, if he will be "reconciled to that one great want, want of sympathy," live at home in peace and quiet. "Mrs. C. has many excellent properties, as you observe; she is unremitting in her attention as a nurse to her children, and, indeed, I believe she would have made an excellent wife to many persons. Coleridge is as little fitted for her as she for him, and I am truly sorry for her."

It might perhaps be stated here that the separation was agreed upon in December. At the end of that month Coleridge visited the Wordsworths at Coleorton with Hartley, and in a few days began to be "more like his old self"—in Dorothy Wordsworth's phrase.

I append an undated letter, preserved in the Morrison Collection, which may belong to this period:—]

LETTER 155

MARY LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

DEAR Coleridge—I have read your silly, very silly, letter, and between laughing and crying I hardly know how to answer it. You are too serious and too kind a vast deal, for we are not much used to either seriousness or kindness from our present friends, and therefore your letter has put me into a greater hurry of spirits that [? than] your pleasant segar did last night, for believe me your two odd faces amused me much more than the mighty transgression vexed me. If Charles had not smoked last night his virtue would not have lasted longer than tonight, and now perhaps with a little of your good counsel he will refrain. Be not too serious if he smokes all the time you are with us—a few chearful evenings spent with you serves to bear up our spirits many a long and weary year—and the very being led into the crime by your segar that you thought so harmless, will serve for our amusement many a dreary time when we can get no letter nor hear no tidings of you.

You must positively must write to Mrs. Coleridge this day, and you must write here, that I may know you write, or you must come and dictate a letter for me to write to her. I know all that you would say in defence of not writing and I allow in full force everything that [you] can say or think, but yet a letter from me or you *shall go today*.

I wanted to tell you, but feared to begin the subject, how well your children are, how Pypos thrives and what a nice child Sara is, and above all I hear such favorable accounts from Southey, from Wordsworth and Hazlitt, of Hartley.

I have got Wordsworth's letters out for you to look at, but you shall not see them or talk of them without you like—Only come here as soon as you receive this, and I will not teize you about writing, but will manage a few lines, Charles and I between us. But something like a letter shall go today.

Come directly

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

LETTER 156

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[P.M. October 23, 1806.]

MY dear Sarah—I thank you a thousand times for the beautiful work you have sent me, I received the parcel from a strange gentleman yesterday. I like the patterns very much, you have quite set me up in finery, but you should have sent the silk handkerchief too. Will you make a parcel of that and send it by the Salisbury coach—I should like to have it in a few days because we have not yet been to Mr. Babbs and that handkerchief would suit this time of year nicely.

I have received a long letter from your brother on the subject of your intended marriage. I have no doubt but you also have one on this business, therefore it is needless to repeat what he says. I am well pleased to find that upon the whole he does not seem to see it in an unfavorable light. He says that, if Mr. D. is a worthy man he shall have no objection to become the brother of a farmer, and he makes an odd request to me that I shall set out to Salisbury to look at and examine into the merits of the said Mr. D., and speaks very confidently as if you would abide by my determination. A pretty sort of an office truly.—Shall I come?

The objections he starts are only such as you and I have already talked over, such as the difference in age, education, habits of life, &c.

You have gone too far in this affair for any interference to be at all desirable, and if you had not, I really do not know what my wishes would be. When you bring Mr. Dowling at Christmas I suppose it will be quite time enough for me to sit in judgement upon him, but

my examination will not be a very severe one. If you fancy a very young man, and he likes an elderly gentlewoman; if he likes a learned and accomplished lady, and you like a not very learned youth, who may need a little polishing, which probably he will never acquire; it is all very well, and God bless you both together and may you be both very long in the same mind.

I am to assist you too, your brother says, in drawing up the marriage settlements—another thankful office! I am not, it seems, to suffer you to keep too much money in your own power, and yet I am to take care of you in case of bankruptcy &c., and I am to recommend to you, for the better management of this point, the serious perusal of *Jeremy Taylor* his opinion on the marriage state, especially his advice against *separate interests* in that happy state, and I am also to tell you how desirable it is that the husband should have the intire direction of all money concerns, except, as your good brother adds, in the case of his own family, where the money, he observes, is very properly deposited in Mrs. Stoddart's hands, she being better suited to enjoy such a trust than any other woman, and therefore it is fit that the general rule should not be extended to her.

We will talk over these things when you come to town, and as to settlements, which are matters of which, I never having had a penny in my own disposal, I never in my life thought of—and if I had been blessed with a good fortune, and that marvellous blessing to boot, a husband, I verily believe I should have crammed it all uncounted into his pocket—But thou hast a cooler head of thy own, and I dare say will do exactly what is expedient and proper, but your brother's opinion seems somewhat like Mr. Barwis's and I dare say you will take it into due consideration, yet perhaps an offer of your own money to take a farm may make *uncle* do less for his nephew, and in that case Mr. D. might be a loser by your generosity. Weigh all these things well, and if you can so contrive it, let your brother *settle* the *settlements* himself when he returns, which will most probably be long before you want them.

You are settled, it seems, in the very house which your brother most dislikes. If you find this house very inconvenient, get out of it as fast as you can, for your brother says he sent you the fifty pound to make you comfortable, and by the general tone of his letter I am sure he wishes to make you easy in money matters: therefore why straiten yourself to pay the debt you owe him, which I am well assured he never means to take? Thank you for the letter and for the picture of pretty little chubby nephew John.

I have been busy making waistcoats and plotting new work to succeed the Tales. As yet I have not hit upon any thing to my mind.

Charles took an emendated copy of his farce to Mr. Wroughton the Manager yesterday. Mr. Wroughton was very friendly to him, and expressed high approbation of the farce, but there are two, he tells him, to come out before it, yet he gave him hopes that it will come out this season, but I am afraid you will not see it by Christmas. It will do for another jaunt for you in the spring. We are pretty well and in fresh spirits about this farce. Charles has been very good lately in the matter of *Smoking*.

When you come bring the gown you wish to sell. Mrs. Coleridge will be in town then, and if she happens not to fancy it, perhaps some other person may.

Coleridge I believe is gone home; he left us with that design but we have not heard from him this fortnight.

Louisa sends her love; she has been very unwell lately.

My respects to Coridon, Mother, and Aunty.

Farewel, my best wishes are with you.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Thursday.

When I saw what a prodigious quantity of work you had put into the finery I was quite ashamed of my unreasonable request, I will never serve you so again, but I do dearly love worked muslin.

NOTE

[Sarah Stoddart now has a new lover, Mr. Dowling, to whom she seems actually to have become engaged. Mr. Barwis, I presume, was Mr. Dowling's uncle. Coridon would, I imagine, be Mr. Dowling.]

LETTER 157

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

5th Dec., 1806.

Tuthill is at Crabtree's who has married Tuthill's sister.

MANNING, your letter dated Hottentots, August the what-was-it? came to hand. I can scarce hope that mine will have the same luck. China—Canton—bless us—how it strains the imagination and makes it ache! I write under another uncertainty, whether it can go to-morrow by a ship which I have just learned is going off direct to your part of the world, or whether the despatches may not be sealed up and this have to wait, for if it is detained here, it will grow staler in a fortnight than in a five

months' voyage coming to you. It will be a point of conscience to send you none but bran-new news (the latest edition), which will but grow the better, like oranges, for a sea voyage. Oh, that you should be so many hemispheres off—if I speak incorrectly you can correct me—why, the simplest death or marriage that takes place here must be important to you as news in the old Bastile. There's your friend Tuthill has got away from France—you remember France? and Tuthill?—ten-to-one but he writes by this post, if he don't get my note in time, apprising him of the vessel sailing. Know then that he has found means to obtain leave from Bonaparte without making use of any *incredible romantic pretences* as some have done, who never meant to fulfil them, to come home; and I have seen him here and at Holcroft's.[1] An't you glad about Tuthill? Now then be sorry for Holcroft, whose new play, called "The Vindictive Man," was damned about a fortnight since. It died in part of its own weakness, and in part for being choked up with bad actors. The two principal parts were destined to Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Bannister, but Mrs. J. has not come to terms with the managers, they have had some squabble, and Bannister shot some of his fingers off by the going off of a gun. So Miss Duncan had her part, and Mr. de Camp[1] took his.[1] His part, the principal comic hope of the play, was most unluckily Goldfinch, taken out of the "Road to Ruin," not only the same character, but the identical Goldfinch—the same as Falstaff is in two plays of Shakspeare. As the devil of ill-luck would have it, half the audience did not know that H. had written it, but were displeased at his stealing from the "Road to Ruin;" and those who might have borne a gentlemanly coxcomb with his "That's your sort," "Go it"—such as Lewis is—did not relish the intolerable vulgarity and inanity of the idea stript of his manner. De Camp was hooted, more than hist, hooted and bellowed off the stage before the second act was finished, so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted. In addition to this, a whore was another principal character—a most unfortunate choice in this moral day. The audience were as scandalised as if you were to introduce such a personage to their private tea-tables. Besides, her action in the play was gross—wheedling an old man into marriage. But the mortal blunder of the play was that which, oddly enough, H. took pride in, and exultingly told me of the night before it came out, that there were no less than eleven principal characters in it, and I believe he meant of the men only, for the play-bill exprest as much, not reckoning one woman and one whore; and true it was, for Mr. Powell, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. H. Siddons, Mr. Barrymore, &c. &c.,—to the number

[1] [See Appendix II., page 970.]

of eleven, had all parts equally prominent, and there was as much of them in quantity and rank as of the hero and heroine—and most of them gentlemen who seldom appear but as the hero's friend in a farce—for a minute or two—and here they all had their ten-minute speeches, and one of them gave the audience a serious account how he was now a lawyer but had been a poet, and then a long enumeration of the inconveniences of authorship, rascally booksellers, reviewers, &c.; which first set the audience a-gaping; but I have said enough. You will be so sorry, that you will not think the best of me for my detail; but news is news at Canton. Poor H. I fear will feel the disappointment very seriously in a pecuniary light. From what I can learn he has saved nothing. You and I were hoping one day that he had; but I fear he has nothing but his pictures and books, and a no very flourishing business, and to be obliged to part with his long-necked Guido that hangs opposite as you enter, and the game-piece that hangs in the back drawing-room, and all those Vandykes, &c.! God should temper the wind to the shorn connoisseur. I hope I need not say to you, that I feel for the weather-beaten author and for all his household. I assure you his fate has soured a good deal the pleasure I should have otherwise taken in my own little farce being accepted, and I hope about to be acted—it is in rehearsal actually, and I expect it to come out next week. It is kept a sort of secret, and the rehearsals have gone on privately, lest by many folks knowing it, the story should come out, which would infallibly damn it. You remember I had sent it before you went. Wroughton read it, and was much pleased with it. I speedily got an answer. I took it to make alterations, and lazily kept it some months, then took courage and furbished it up in a day or two and took it. In less than a fortnight I heard the principal part was given to Elliston, who liked it, and only wanted a prologue, which I have since done and sent; and I had a note the day before yesterday from the manager, Wroughton (bless his fat face—he is not a bad actor in some things), to say that I should be summoned to the rehearsal after the next, which next was to be yesterday. I had no idea it was so forward. I have had no trouble, attended no reading or rehearsal, made no interest; what a contrast to the usual parade of authors! But it is peculiar to modesty to do all things without noise or pomp! I have some suspicion it will appear in public on Wednesday next, for W. says in his note, it is so forward that if wanted it may come out next week, and a new melo-drama is announced for every day till then: and "a new farce is in rehearsal," is put up in the bills. Now you'd like to know the subject. The title is "Mr. H.," no more; how simple, how taking! A great H. sprawling over the play-bill and attracting eyes at

every corner. The story is a coxcomb appearing at Bath, vastly rich —all the ladies dying for him—all bursting to know who he is—but he goes by no other name than Mr. H.—a curiosity like that of the dames of Strasburg about the man with the great nose. But I won't tell you any more about it. Yes, I will; but I can't give you an idea how I have done it. I'll just tell you that after much vehement admiration, when his true name comes out, "Hogsflesh," all the women shun him, avoid him, and not one can be found to change their name for him—that's the idea—how flat it is here! —but how whimsical in the farce! and only think how hard upon me it is that the ship is despatched to-morrow, and my triumph cannot be ascertained till the Wednesday after—but all China will ring of it by and by. N.B. (But this is a secret). The Professor has got a tragedy coming out with the young Roscius in it in January next, as we say—January last it will be with you—and though it is a profound secret now, as all his affairs are, it cannot be much of one by the time you read this. However, don't let it go any further. I understand there are dramatic exhibitions in China. One would not like to be forestalled. Do you find in all this stuff I have written anything like those feelings which one should send my old adventuring friend, that is gone to wander among Tartars and may never come again? I don't—but your going away, and all about you, is a threadbare topic. I have worn it out with thinking—it has come to me when I have been dull with anything, till my sadness has seemed more to have come from it than to have introduced it. I want you, you don't know how much—but if I had you here in my European garret, we should but talk over such stuff as I have written—so—. Those "Tales from Shakespear" are near coming out, and Mary has begun a new work. Mr. Dawe is turned author: he has been in such a way lately—Dawe the painter, I mean—he sits and stands about at Holcroft's and says nothing—then sighs and leans his head on his hand. I took him to be in love—but it seems he was only meditating a work,—"The Life of Morland,"—the young man is not used to composition. Rickman and Captain Burney are well; they assemble at my house pretty regularly of a Wednesday—a new institution. Like other great men I have a public day, cribbage and pipes, with Phillips and noisy Martin.

Good Heaven! what a bit only I've got left! How shall I squeeze all I know into this morsel! Coleridge is come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution. I shall get £200 from the theatre if "Mr. H." has a good run, and I hope £100 for the copyright. Nothing if it fails; and there never was a more ticklish thing. The whole depends on the manner in which the name is brought out, which I value myself on, as a *chef-d'œuvre*.

How the paper grows less and less! In less than two minutes I shall cease to talk to you, and you may rave to the Great Wall of China. N.B. Is there such a wall! Is it as big as Old London Wall by Bedlam? Have you met with a friend of mine, named Ball, at Canton?—if you are acquainted, remember me kindly to him.[1] May-be, you'll think I have not said enough of Tuthill and the Holcrofts. Tuthill is a noble fellow, as far as I can judge. The Holcrofts bear their disappointment pretty well, but indeed they are sadly mortified. Mrs. H. is cast down. It was well, if it were but on this account, that Tuthill is come home. N.B. If my little thing don't succeed, I shall easily survive, having, as it were, compared to H.'s venture, but a sixteenth in the lottery. Mary and I are to sit next the orchestra in the pit, next the tweedledees. She remembers you. You are more to us than five hundred farces, clappings, &c.

Come back one day. C. Lamb.

Note

[The letter is addressed to T. Manning, Esq., Canton. At the end Lamb adds:—

"Holcroft has just writ to me as follows:—

"'Dear Sir, Miss L. has informed us you are writing to Manning. Will you be kind enough to inform him directly from me that I and my family are most truly anxious for his safety; that if praying could bring down blessings on him we should pray morning noon and night; that his and our good friends the Tuthills are once more happily safe in England, and that I earnestly entreat not only a single letter but a correspondence with him whenever the thing [is] practicable, with such an address as may make letters from me likely to find him. In short, dear sir, if you will be kind enough to speak of me to Manning, you cannot speak with greater friendship and respect than I feel.

"'Yours with true friendship and kindness.'"

In the beginning of this letter we see the first germ of an idea afterwards developed in the letter to Barron Field of August 31, 1817 (see page 500), and again, more fully, in the *Elia* essay "Distant Correspondents."

Tuthill, afterwards Sir George Leman Tuthill (1772-1835), was the physician, who, on a visit to Paris, was included among the English *detenus* and held a captive for several years. He was released only after his wife had made a personal appeal to Napoleon on his return from hunting. The words "incredible romantic pretences" refer chaffingly to Manning's application to Napoleon for liberty to return to England two or three years previously.

[1] [See Appendix II., page 970.]

Holcroft's "Vindictive Man" was produced at Drury Lane on November 20, 1806. It was a complete failure. His "Road to Ruin," produced in 1792 at Covent Garden, with "Gentleman" Lewis as Goldfinch, had been a great success and is still occasionally played. Holcroft was also a very voluminous author and translator, and the partner of his brother-in-law, Mercier, in a printing business, which, however, was unprofitable.

"The dames of Strasburg"—in *Tristram Shandy*, Vol. IV.

"The Professor has a tragedy." This was "Faulkener," for which Lamb wrote the prologue (see Letters Nos. 89 and 90, pages 225 and 228, and Vol. V., page 123). Owing to the capriciousness of Master Betty, the Young Roscius, it was not produced until December 16, 1807, and then with Elliston in the principal part. It was only partially successful, a result for which Godwin blamed Holcroft, who had revised the play.

Mary Lamb's new work was *Mrs. Leicester's School.*

"Mr. Dawe is turned author." *The Life of George Morland*, by George Dawe, was published in 1807.

Coleridge's intended series of lectures on Taste was abandoned. He did not actually deliver any until January 12, 1808.]

LETTER 158

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: December 11, 1806.]

Mary's Love to all of you—I wouldn't let her write—

DEAR Wordsworth, Mr. H. came out last night and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *Letter*. We are pretty stout about it, have had plenty of condoling friends, but after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the Prologue in most of the Morning Papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witness'd to a Prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard! a thing I did merely as a task, because it was wanted —and set no great store by; and Mr. H.——!!

The quantity of friends we had in the house, my brother and I being in Public Offices &c., was astonishing—but they yielded at length to a few hisses. A hundred hisses—damn the word, I write it like kisses—how different—a hundred hisses outweigh a 1000 Claps. The former come more directly from the Heart—Well, 'tis withdrawn and there is an end.

Better Luck to us—— C. L.

11 Dec.—(turn over).

P.S. Pray when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind Loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Xmas —as I shall have but a day or two,—and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well.

NOTE

[" Mr. H." was produced at Drury Lane on December 10, with Elliston in the title-rôle. Lamb's account of the evening is supplemented by Hazlitt in his essay "On Great and Little Things" and by Crabb Robinson, a new friend whom he had just made, in his *Diary*. See Vol. V. of this edition, pages 180 and 368. The curious thing is that the management of Drury Lane advertised the farce as a success and announced it for the next night. But Lamb apparently interfered and it was not played again. Some few years later " Mr. H." was performed acceptably in America.]

LETTER 159

CHARLES LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

December 11 [1806].

Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c. God bless you!

DEAR Sarah,—Mary is a little cut at the ill success of " Mr. H.," which came out last night and *failed*. I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprise you of the coming out of " Mr. H." for fear of ill-luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you mentioned. But whenever you come you shall be most welcome.

God bless you, dear Sarah,

Yours most truly, C. L.

Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write.

NOTE

[Following this should come a letter from Mary Lamb to Mrs. Thomas Clarkson, dated December 23, 1806, not available for this

edition. It also describes the ill success of "Mr. H." "The blame rested chiefly with Charles and yet it should not be called blame for it was mere ignorance of stage effect . . . he seems perfectly aware why and for what cause it failed. He intends to write one more with all his dearly bought experience in his head, and should that share same fate he will then turn his mind to some other pursuit." Lamb did not write another farce for many years. When he did—"The Pawnbroker's Daughter" (see Vol. V. of this edition, page 212)—it deservedly was not acted.]

LETTER 160

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date. ? 1806.]

I REPENT. Can that God whom thy votaries say that thou hast demolished expect more? I did indite a splenetic letter, but did the black Hypocondria never gripe *thy* heart, till thou hast taken a friend for an enemy? The foul fiend Flibbertigibbet leads me over four inched bridges, to course my own shadow for a traitor. There are certain positions of the moon, under which I counsel thee not to take anything written from this domicile as serious.

I rank thee with Alves, Latinè Helvetius, or any of his cursed crew? Thou art my friend, and henceforth my philosopher—thou shalt teach Distinction to the junior branches of my household, and Deception to the greyhaired Janitress at my door.

What! Are these atonements? Can Arcadians be brought upon knees, creeping and crouching?

Come, as Macbeth's drunken porter says, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock—seven times in a day shalt thou batter at my peace, and if I shut aught against thee, save the Temple of Janus, may Briareus, with his hundred hands, in each a brass knocker, lead me such a life. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[I cannot account for this letter in the absence of its predecessor and that from Godwin to which it replies.

"The foul fiend Flibbertigibbet." See "King Lear," III., 4, 120.

"Helvetius"—Claude Adrien Helvetius (1715-1771), author of *De L'Esprit*, which was condemned by the Sorbonne.

"Macbeth's drunken porter." See "Macbeth," II., 3.

"Batter at my peace."

The tyrant has not battered at their peace.

"Macbeth," IV., 3, 178.

"Temple of Janus." The doors of the temple were closed during peace and opened in war time.]

LETTER 161

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: January 29, 1807.]

DEAR Wordsworth—

We have book'd off from Swan and Two Necks, Lad Lane, this day (per Coach) the Tales from Shakespear. You will forgive the plates, when I tell you they were left to the direction of Godwin, who left the choice of subjects to the bad baby, who from mischief (I suppose) has chosen one from damn'd beastly vulgarity (vide Merch. Venice) where no atom of authority was in the tale to justify it—to another has given a name which exists not in the tale, Nic Bottom, and which she thought would be funny, though in this I suspect *his* hand, for I guess her reading does not reach far enough to know Bottom's Xtian name—and one of Hamlet, and Grave digging, a scene which is not hinted at in the story, and you might as well have put King Canute the Great reproving his courtiers—the rest are Giants and Giantesses. Suffice it, to save our taste and damn our folly, that we left it all to a friend W. G.—who in the first place cheated me into putting a name to them, which I did not mean, but do not repent, and then wrote a puff about their *simplicity*, &c., to go with the advertisement as in my name! Enough of this egregious dupery. —I will try to abstract the load of teazing circumstances from the Stories and tell you that I am answerable for Lear, Macbeth, Timon, Romeo, Hamlet, Othello, for occasionally a tail piece or correction of grammar, for none of the cuts and all of the spelling. The rest is my Sister's.—We think Pericles of hers the best, and Othello of mine—but I hope all have some good. As You Like It we like least.

So much, only begging you to tear out the cuts and give them to Johnny, as "Mrs. Godwin's fancy."

C. L.

Thursday,
29 Jan., 1807.

Our Love *to all.*

I had almost forgot,

My part of the Preface begins in the middle of a sentence, in last but one page after a colon thus

:—*which if they be happily so done &c.*

the former part hath a more feminine turn and does hold me up something as an instructor to young Ladies: but upon my modesty's honour I wrote it not.

Godwin told My Sister that the Baby chose the Subjects. A fact in Taste.

NOTE

[Lamb has run his pen lightly through "God bless me," at the beginning of the postscript.

The plates to the *Tales from Shakespear* will be found reproduced in facsimile in Vol. III. of the present edition. They were designed probably by Mulready.

An interval of nine months occurs before we come to another letter of the date of which we can be certain. Of what happened in this time we know little or nothing, but I think it probable that the following hitherto unpublished letter from Charles Lamb to the Clarksons explains part of the long silence. The postmark gives no year, but it must be either 1807 or 1808, and since the *Dramatic Specimens* herein referred to as in preparation were published in 1808, we may confidently assume it to be 1807. The letter tells its own story only too clearly: the Lambs had been on a visit to the Clarksons at Bury St. Edmunds; Mary Lamb had again fallen ill while there; and her brother had just left her once more at her Hoxton Asylum:—]

LETTER 162

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS AND CATHERINE CLARKSON

[P.M. June (1807).]

DEAR Mr. & Mrs. Clarkson, you will wish to know how we performed our journey. My sister was tolerably quiet until we got to Chelmsford, where she began to be very bad indeed, as your friends William Knight and his family can tell you when you see them. What I should have done without their kindness I don't know, but among other acts of great attention, they provided me with a waistcoat to confine her arms, by the help of which we went through the rest of our journey. But sadly tired and miserably

depressed she was before we arrived at Hoxton. We got there about half past eight; and now 'tis all over, I have great satisfaction that she is among people who have been used to her. In all probability a few months or even weeks will restore her (her last illness confined her ten weeks) but if she does recover I shall be very careful how I take her so far from home again. I am so fatigued, for she talked in the most wretched desponding way conceivable, particularly the last three stages, she talked all the way,—so that you won't expect me to say much, or even to express myself as I should do in thanks for your kindnesses. My sister will acknowlege them when she can.—

I shall not have heard how she is to day until too late for the Post, but if any great change takes place for better or worse, I shall certainly let you know.

She tells me something about having given away one of my coats to your servant. It is a new one, and perhaps may be of small use to him. If you can get it me again, I shall very willingly give him a compensation. I shall also be much obliged by your sending in a parcel all the manuscripts, books &c. she left behind. I want in particular the Dramatic Extracts, as my purpose is to make use of the remainder of my holydays in completing them at the British Museum, which will be employment & money in the end.

I am exceedingly harrassed with the journey, but that will go off in a day or two, and I will set to work. I know you will grieve for us, but I hope my sister's illness is not worse than many she has got through before. Only I am afraid the fatigue of the journey may affect her general health. You shall have notice how she goes on. In the mean time, accept our kindest thanks.

[*Signature cut off.*]

LETTER 163

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date. Endorsed Oct., 1807.]

MY dear Sarah,—I am two letters in your debt; but it has not been so much from idleness, as a wish first to see how your comical love affair would turn out. You know, I make a pretence not to interfere; but like all old maids I feel a mighty solicitude about the event of love stories. I learn from the Lover that he has not been so remiss in his duty as you supposed. His Effusion, and your complaints of his inconstancy, crossed each other on the road. He tells me his was a very strange letter, and that

probably it has affronted you. That it was a strange letter I can readily believe; but that you were affronted by a strange letter is not so easy for me to conceive, that not being your way of taking things. But however it be, let some answer come, either to him, or else to me, showing cause why you do not answer him. And pray, by all means, preserve the said letter, that I may one day have the pleasure of seeing how Mr. Hazlitt treats of love.

I was at your brother's on Thursday. Mrs. S. tells me she has not written, because she does not like to put you to the expense of postage. They are very well. Little Missy thrives amazingly. Mrs. Stoddart conjectures she is in the family way again; and those kind of conjectures generally prove too true. Your other sister-in-law, Mrs. Hazlitt, was brought to bed last week of a boy: so that you are likely to have plenty of nephews and nieces.

Yesterday evening we were at Rickman's; and who should we find there but Hazlitt; though, if you do not know it was his first invitation there, it will not surprise you as much as it did us. We were very much pleased, because we dearly love our friends to be respected by our friends.

The most remarkable events of the evening were, that we had a very fine pine-apple; that Mr. Phillips, Mr. Lamb, and Mr. Hazlitt played at Cribbage in the most polite and gentlemanly manner possible—and that I won two rubbers at whist.

I am glad Aunty left you some business to do. Our compliments to her and your Mother. Is it as cold at Winterslow as it is here? How do the Lions go on? I am better, and Charles is tolerably well. Godwin's new Tragedy will probably be damned the latter end of next week. Charles has written the Prologue. Prologues and Epilogues will be his death. If you know the extent of Mrs. Reynolds' poverty, you will be glad to hear Mr. Norris has got ten pounds a year for her from the Temple Society. She will be able to make out pretty well now.

Farewell—Determine as wisely as you can in regard to Hazlitt; and, if your determination is to have him, Heaven send you many happy years together. If I am not mistaken, I have concluded letters on the Corydon Courtship with this same wish. I hope it is not ominous of change; for if I were sure you would not be quite starved to death, nor beaten to a mummy, I should like to see Hazlitt and you come together, if (as Charles observes) it were only for the joke sake.

Write instantly to me.

Yours most affectionately,

M. Lamb.

Saturday morning.

NOTE

[The reference to Godwin's tragedy, "Faulkener," which was produced on December 16, 1807, would indicate a later date, except that that play was so frequently postponed.

The Lover this time is, at last, William Hazlitt. Miss Stoddart was not his first love; some time before he had wished to marry a Miss Railton of Liverpool; then, in the Lakes, he had had passages with a farmer's daughter involving a ducking at the hands of jealous rivals; while De Quincey would have us believe that Hazlitt proposed to Dorothy Wordsworth. But it was Sarah Stoddart whom he was destined to marry. A specimen of Hazlitt's love letters (which Mary Lamb wished to see) will be found in Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, Vol. I., page 153. The marriage turned out anything but a joke.

Mrs. Reynolds' poverty was in later years further relieved by an annuity of £30 from Charles Lamb.]

LETTER 164

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

Dec. 21, 1807.

MY dear Sarah,—I have deferred answering your last letter, in hopes of being able to give you some intelligence that might be useful to you; for I every day expected that Hazlitt or you would communicate the affair to your brother; but, as the Doctor is silent upon the subject, I conclude he yet knows nothing of the matter. You desire my advice; and therefore I tell you I think you ought to tell your brother as soon as possible; for, at present, he is on very friendly visiting terms with Hazlitt, and, if he is not offended by a too long concealment, will do every thing in his power to serve you. If you chuse that I should tell him, I will; but I think it would come better from you. If you can persuade Hazlitt to mention it, that would be still better; for I know your brother would be unwilling to give credit to you, because you deceived yourself in regard to Corydon. Hazlitt, I know, is shy of speaking first; but I think it of such great importance to you to have your brother friendly in the business, that, if you can overcome his reluctance, it would be a great point gained. For you must begin the world with ready money—at least an hundred pound; for, if you once go into furnished lodgings, you will never be able to lay by money to buy furniture.

If you obtain your brother's approbation, he might assist you, either by lending or otherwise. I have a great opinion of his generosity, where he thinks it would be useful.

Hazlitt's brother is mightily pleased with the match; but he says you must have furniture, and be clear in the world at first setting out, or you will be always behindhand. He also said he would give you what furniture he could spare. I am afraid you can bring but few things away from your house. What a pity that you have laid out so much money on your cottage!—that money would have just done. I most heartily congratulate you on having so well got over your first difficulties; and, now that it is quite settled, let us have no more fears. I now mean not only to hope and wish, but to persuade myself, that you will be very happy together.

Endeavour to keep your mind as easy as you can. You ought to begin the world with a good stock of health and spirits: it is quite as necessary as ready money at first setting out. Do not teize yourself about coming to town. When your brother learns how things are going on, we shall consult him about meetings and so forth; but, at present, any hasty step of that kind would not answer, I know. If Hazlitt were to go down to Salisbury, or you were to come up here, without consulting your brother, you know it would never do.

Charles is just come in to dinner; he desires his love and best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

Monday morning.

Note

[Letter No. 165 shows that when Dr. Stoddart was at length told of the engagement he resented it.

We now come to two curious letters from Charles Lamb to Joseph Hume, not available for this edition, which are printed by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in *Lamb and Hazlitt*. The first, dated December 29, 1807, contains the beginning of an elaborate hoax maintained by Lamb and Hume (who was Joseph Hume, a clerk in the Victualling Office at Somerset House, and the author of a translation of Tasso), in which Hazlitt, although the victim, played his part. Lamb asserts that Hazlitt has cut his throat. He also incidentally regrets that he cannot accept an invitation to dine with Hume: "Cold bones of mutton and leather-roasted potatoes at Pimlico at ten must carry it away from a certain Turkey and contingent plumb-pudding at Montpelier at four (I always spell plumb-pudding with a *b*, p-l-u-m-*b*—) I think it reads fatter and more suetty."

In reply to this letter came one from Hume, dated January 11, 1808, referring to a humble petition and remonstrance by Hazlitt,

dated January 10, 1808, showing that he is not dead. The petition will be found in full in *Lamb and Hazlitt*. It ends thus:—

> With all the sincerity of a man doubtful between life and death, the petitioner declares that he looks upon the said Charles Lamb as the ring-leader in this unjust conspiracy against him, and as the sole cause and author of the jeopardy he is in: but that as losers have leave to speak, he must say, that, if it were not for a poem he wrote on Tobacco about two years ago, a farce called Mr. H—— he brought out last winter with more wit than discretion in it, some prologues and epilogues he has since written with good success, and some lively notes he is at present writing on dead authors, he sees no reason why he should not be considered as much a dead man as himself, and the undertaker spoken to accordingly.

The next letter, dated January 12, 1808, carrying on the joke, consists of speculations as to Hazlitt's reappearance. Lamb remarks that the commonest reason for the return of the spirits of the dead is the desire to reveal hidden treasures which they had hoarded in their lifetime. He destroys this theory in the case of Hazlitt in the following passage:—

"I for my part always looked upon our dear friend as a man rich rather in the gifts of his mind than in earthly treasures. He had few rents or comings in, that I was ever aware of, small (if any) landed property, and by all that I could witness he subsisted more upon the well-timed contributions of a few chosen friends who knew his worth, than upon any Estate which could properly be called his own. I myself have contributed my part. God knows, I speak not this in reproach. I have never taken, nor indeed did the Deceased offer, any *written acknowledgments* of the various sums which he has had of me, by which I could make the fact manifest to the legal eye of an Executor or Administrator. He was not a Man to affect these niceties in his transactions with his friends. He would often say, Money was nothing between intimate acquaintances, that Golden Streams had no Ebb, that a Purse mouth never regorged, that God loved a chearful giver but the Devil hated a free taker, that a paid Loan makes angels groan, with many such like sayings: he had always free and generous notions about money. His nearest friends know this best."

Continuing the subject of the return of spirits, Lamb decides that it must be with the wish to establish some speculative point in religion. "But whatever the cause of this re-appearance may prove to be, we may now with truth assert that our deceased friend has attained to one object of his pursuits, one hour's separate existence gives a dead man clearer notions of metaphysics than all the treatises which in his state of casual entanglement the least immersed spirit can out-spin. It is good to leave such subjects to that period when we shall have no Heads to ache, no brains to distort, no faces to lengthen, no clothes to neglect."]

LETTER 165

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[P.M. February 12, 1808.]

MY dear Sarah,—I have sent your letter and drawing off to Wem (Hazlitt's father's), in Shropshire, where I conjecture Hazlitt is. He left town on Saturday afternoon, without telling us where he was going. He seemed very impatient at not hearing from you. He was very ill and I suppose is gone home to his father's to be nursed.

I find Hazlitt has mentioned to you an intention which we had of asking you up to town, which we were bent on doing, but, having named it since to your brother, the Doctor expressed a strong desire that you should not come to town to be at any other house than his own, for he said that it would have a very strange appearance. His wife's father is coming to be with them till near the end of April, after which time he shall have full room for you. And if you are to be married, he wishes that you should be married with all the proper decorums, *from his house*. Now though we should be most willing to run any hazards of disobliging him, if there were no other means of your and Hazlitt's meeting, yet as he seems so friendly to the match, it would not be worth while to alienate him from you and ourselves too, for the slight accommodation which the difference of a few weeks would make, provided always, and be it understood, that if you and H. make up your minds to be married before the time in which you can be at your brother's, our house stands open and most ready at a moment's notice to receive you. Only we would not quarrel unnecessarily with your brother. Let there be a clear necessity shewn, and we will quarrel with any body's brother. Now though I have written to the above effect, I hope you will not conceive, but, that both my brother and I had looked forward to your coming with unmixed pleasure, and are really disappointed at your brother's declaration, for next to the pleasure of being married, is the pleasure of making, or helping marriages forward.

We wish to hear from you, that you do not take our *seeming change* of purpose in ill part, for it is but *seeming* on our part; for it was my brother's suggestion, by him first mentioned to Hazlitt, and cordially approved by me; but your brother has set his face against it, and it is better to take him along with us, in our plans, if he will good-naturedly go along with us, than not.

The reason I have not written lately has been that I thought it better to leave you all to the workings of your own minds in this

momentous affair, in which the inclinations of a bye-stander have a right to form a wish, but not to give a vote.

Being, with the help of wide lines, at the end of my last page, I conclude with our kind wishes, and prayers for the best.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

H.'s direction is (if he is there) at Wem in Shropshire. I suppose as letters must come to London first, you had better inclose them, while he is there, for my brother in London.

NOTE

[The drawing referred to, says Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, was a sketch of Middleton Cottage, Miss Stoddart's house at Winterslow (see next letter).]

LETTER 166

CHARLES LAMB TO THE REV. W. HAZLITT

Temple, 18th February, 1808.

SIR,—I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward one or two of his shirts to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Hants [Wilts] (not far from Salisbury), where the lady lives whose Cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen, and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that Letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both Painter and Author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very Cartoon which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town, as to the real place of his destination.

And some words at the back of the said Cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the handwriting to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety. But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by LOVE, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

The letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our kindest remembrances and wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.

I am, Sir, your humble serv^{t}., CH. LAMB.

NOTE

[The Rev. William Hazlitt, Hazlitt's father (1737-1820), was a Unitarian minister at Wem, in Shropshire, the son of an Irish Protestant. Hazlitt's mother was Grace Loftus of Wisbech, a farmer's daughter.

Sarah Stoddart's letter containing the drawing referred to had been sent by the Lambs to William Hazlitt at Wem, whereas Hazlitt, instead of seeking his father's roof as arranged, had sought his betrothed's, and had himself helped in the mystification.

Peggy was Hazlitt's only sister.]

LETTER 167

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: 26 February, 1808.]

DEAR Missionary,—Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her, and with the less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet appeared. I think Horace says somewhere, *nox longa*. I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence; but I have not heard of the silk, or of Mr. Knox, save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances! or it may be that he has not succeeded in getting the article on shore, for it is among the *res prohibitæ et non nisi smuggle-ationis viâ fruendæ*. But so it is, in the friendships between *wicked men*, the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful. *Splendida vitia* at best. Stay, while I remember it—Mrs. Holcroft was safely delivered of a girl some day in last week. Mother and child doing well. Mr. Holcroft has been attack'd with severe rheumatism. They have moved to Clipstone Street. I suppose you know my farce was damned. The noise still rings in my ears. Was you ever in the pillory?—being damned is something like that. Godwin keeps a shop in Skinner Street, Snow Hill, he is turned children's bookseller, and sells penny, twopenny, threepenny, and fourpenny books. Sometimes he gets an order for the dearer sort of Books. (Mind, all that I tell you in this letter is true.) A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt

and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. She has somewhere about £80 a year, to be £120 when her mother dies. He has no settlement except what he can claim from the Parish. *Pauper est Cinna, sed amat.* The thing is therefore in abeyance. But there is love o' both sides. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connexion of ideas here, how the devil should you?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors! operation of iniquitous laws! is Magna Charta then a mockery? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question) my spirits are pretty good, but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Stygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun; he comes again with tenfold bitterness the next day.—(Mind, I am not in debt, I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination.) I have done two books since the failure of my farce; they will both be out this summer. The one is a juvenile book—"The Adventures of Ulysses," intended to be an introduction to the reading of Telemachus! It is done out of the Odyssey, not from the Greek: I would not mislead you; nor yet from Pope's Odyssey, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The "Shakespear Tales" suggested the doing it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller. The other is done for Longman, and is "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespear." Specimens are becoming fashionable. We have—"Specimens of Ancient English Poets," "Specimens of Modern English Poets," "Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers," without end. They used to be called "Beauties." You have seen "Beauties of Shakespear?" so have many people that never saw any beauties in Shakespear. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk; and I am to share the profits after all deductions; *i.e.* a year or two hence I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury-Lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Damn 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring something like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely: to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss

with: and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! God be pleased to make the breath stink and the teeth rot out of them all therefore! Make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cured me of melancholy, as David cured Saul; but I don't throw stones at him, as Saul did at David in payment. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. O, that you could go to the new opera of "Kais" to-night! 'Tis all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervishes, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury-lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddons's or Mr. Kemble's acting; and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! Old Sergeant Hill is dead. Mrs. Rickman is in the family way. It is thought that Hazlitt will have children, if he marries Miss Stoddart. I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire?—Because it was once a county palatine, and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft said, being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, "Hook and I." Mr. Hook is author of several pieces, "Tekeli," &c. You know what *hooks and eyes* are, don't you? They are what little boys do up their breeches with. Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood: the puns were ready and Swift-like; but don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! "The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with." That begins one of Dr. Hawkesworth's papers in the "Adventurer," and is, I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the Doctor's mouth.[1] White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but had rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse which he gave to Voltaire, when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French institute in the same manner, that wished to be introduced to me. Bonaparte has

[1] [See Appendix II., page 970.]

voted 5,000 livres to Davy, the great young English chemist; but it has not arrived. Coleridge has delivered two lectures at the Royal Institution; two more were attended, but he did not come. It is thought he has gone sick upon them. He a'n't well, that's certain. Wordsworth is coming to see him. He sits up in a two pair of stairs room at the "Courier" Office, and receives visitors on his close stool. How is Mr. Ball? He has sent for a prospectus of the London Library.

Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is President of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading-rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution, which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell Square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Con-lege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have apartments in the Mansion House. He says he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakspeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear then nothing is wanting but the mind. Even Coleridge a little checked at this hardihood of assertion. Jones of Trinity, I suppose you know he is dead. Dyer came to me the other evening at 11 o'clock, when there was a large room full of company, which I usually get together on a Wednesday evening (all great men have public days), to propose to me to have my face done by a Miss Beetham (or Betham), a miniature painter, some relation to Mrs. Beetham the Profilist or Pattern Mangle woman opposite to St. Dunstan's, to put before my book of Extracts. I declined it.

Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite; I have said all I have to say; the rest is but remembrances, which we shall bear in our heads of you, while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live; emptiness abounds. But, in fulness of affection, we remain yours,

C. L.

NOTE

[Manning had written in April, 1807, saying that a roll of silk was on its way to Mary Lamb. It was, however, another letter, not preserved, which mentioned Mr. Knox as the bearer.

"Horace says somewhere." In Epistles, Book I., 1, 20.

"*Res prohibitæ et non nisi smuggle-ationis vîâ fruendæ*"—"The things prohibited and only to be enjoyed if they are smuggled."

"*Splendida vitia.*" Glorious aberrations.

Godwin sold books at 41 Skinner Street under his wife's name—M. J. Godwin. At first when he began, in 1805, in Hanway Street, he had used the name of Thomas Hodgkins, his manager.

"*Pauper est Cinna, sed amat*"—"Cinna (*i.e.*, Hazlitt) is poor, but none the less he loves." Lamb is evidently thinking of Ben Jonson's *Timber; or, Discoveries*, where Ben Jonson quotes Martial's one-line epigram (8, xix.), "Pauper videri Cinna vult; et est pauper."

"Damn 'em, how they hissed." This passage has in it the germ of Lamb's essay in *The Reflector* two or three years later, "On the Custom of Hissing at the Theatres" (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 87).

"Blind mouths" (*Lycidas*, 119).

John Braham (? 1774-1856), the great tenor and the composer of "The Death of Nelson." Lamb praised him again in his *Elia* essay "Imperfect Sympathies," and later wrote an amusing article on Braham's recantation of Hebraism (see "The Religion of Actors," Vol. I., page 287). "Kais," composed by Braham and Reeve, was produced at Drury Lane, February 11, 1808.

"Old Sergeant Hill." George Hill (1716-1808), nicknamed Serjeant Labyrinth, the hero of many stories of absence-of-mind. He would have appealed to Manning on account of his mathematical abilities. He died on February 21.

"Hook and I." This pun is attributed also to others; who may very easily have made it independently. Theodore Hook was then only nineteen, but had already written "Tekeli," a melodrama, and several farces. Talfourd omits the references to breeches.

"Dr. Hawkesworth." John Hawkesworth, LL.D. (? 1715-1773), the editor of Swift, a director of the East India Company, and the friend of Johnson whom he imitated in *The Adventurer*. He also made one of the translations of Fénélon's *Télémaque*, to which Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses* was to serve as prologue.

James White, Lamb's friend and the author of *Falstaff's Letters*, was for many years a clerk in the Treasurer's office at Christ's Hospital. Later he founded an advertisement agency, which still exists.

"Congreve's repulse." The story is told by Johnson in the *Lives of the Poets*. Congreve "disgusted him [Voltaire] by the despicable foppery of desiring to be considered not as an author but a gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, 'that, if he had been only a gentleman, he should not have come to visit him.'"

"Young Davy." Afterwards Sir Humphry Davy, and now one of Coleridge's correspondents. He had been awarded the Napoleon prize of 3,000 francs "for his discoveries announced in the *Philosophical Transactions* for the year 1807."

"Coleridge's lectures." Coleridge delivered the first on January 12, 1808, and the second on February 5. The third and fourth were eventually delivered some time before April 8. The subject was not Taste but Poetry. Coleridge's rooms over *The Courier* office at No. 348 Strand are described by De Quincey in his *Works*, Vol. II. (1863 edition), page 98.

It was Coleridge's illness that was bringing Wordsworth to town, to be followed by Southey, largely by the instrumentality of Charles and Mary Lamb. It is conjectured that Coleridge was just then more than usually in the power of drugs.

Sir Joseph Banks, as President of the Royal Society, had written a letter to the East India Company supporting Manning's wish to practise as a doctor in Canton.

The similar institutions that sprang up in imitation of the Royal Institution have all vanished, except the London Institution in Finsbury Circus.

"Writing like Shakspeare." This passage was omitted by Talfourd. He seems to have shown it to Crabb Robinson, just after Lamb's death, as one of the things that could not be published. Robinson (or Robinson's editor, Dr. Sadler), in recording the event, substitutes a dash for Wordsworth's name.

Miss Betham was Miss Mary Matilda Betham (1776-1852), afterwards a friend and correspondent of Lamb. We shall soon meet her again. She had written a *Biographical Dictionary of the Celebrated Women of Every Age and Country*, 1804, and some poems. Among her sitters were Coleridge and Mrs. Coleridge. The Profilist opposite St. Dunstan's was, I take it, E. Beetham, Patent Washing-Mill Maker at 27 Fleet Street. I find this in the 1808 Directory. The shop was close to Inner Temple Lane.]

LETTER 168

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

March 11, 1808.

DEAR Godwin,—The giant's vomit was perfectly nauseous, and I am glad you pointed it out. I have removed the objection. To the other passages I can find no other objection but what you may bring to numberless passages besides, such as of Scylla snatching up the six men, etc., that is to say, they are lively images of *shocking* things. If you want a book, which is not occasionally to *shock*, you should not have thought of a tale which was so full of anthropophagi and wonders. I cannot alter

these things without enervating the Book, and I will not alter them if the penalty should be that you and all the London booksellers should refuse it. But speaking as author to author, I must say that I think *the terrible* in those two passages seems to me so much to preponderate over the nauseous, as to make them rather fine than disgusting. Who is to read them, I don't know: who is it that reads Tales of Terror and Mysteries of Udolpho? Such things sell. I only say that I will not consent to alter such passages, which I know to be some of the best in the book. As an author I say to you an author, Touch not my work. As to a bookseller I say, Take the work such as it is, or refuse it. You are as free to refuse it as when we first talked of it. As to a friend I say, Don't plague yourself and me with nonsensical objections. I assure you I will not alter one more word.

NOTE

[This letter refers to the proofs of Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, his prose paraphrase for children of Chapman's translation of the *Odyssey*, which Mrs. Godwin was publishing. Godwin had written the following letter:—

Skinner St., March 10, 1808.

DEAR LAMB,—I address you with all humility, because I know you to be *tenax propositi*. Hear me, I entreat you, with patience.

It is strange with what different feelings an author and a bookseller looks at the same manuscript. I know this by experience: I was an author, I am a bookseller. The author thinks what will conduce to his honour: the bookseller what will cause his commodities to sell.

You, or some other wise man, I have heard to say, It is children that read children's books, when they are read, but it is parents that choose them. The critical thought of the tradesman put itself therefore into the place of the parent, and what the parent will condemn.

We live in squeamish days. Amid the beauties of your manuscript, of which no man can think more highly than I do, what will the squeamish say to such expressions as these,—"devoured their limbs, yet warm and trembling, lapping the blood," p. 10. Or to the giant's vomit, p. 14; or to the minute and shocking description of the extinguishing the giant's eye in the page following. You, I daresay, have no formed plan of excluding the female sex from among your readers, and I, as a bookseller, must consider that if you have you exclude one half of the human species.

Nothing is more easy than to modify these things if you please, and nothing, I think, is more indispensable.

Give me, as soon as possible, your thoughts on the matter.

I should also like a preface. Half our customers know not Homer, or know him only as you and I know the lost authors of antiquity. What can be more proper than to mention one or two of those obvious recommendations of his works, which must lead every human creature to desire a nearer acquaintance.—

Believe me, ever faithfully yours,

W. GODWIN.

As a glance at the *Adventures of Ulysses* will show (see Vol. III. of this edition), Lamb did not make the alteration on pages 10 or 15 (pages 211 and 212 of Vol. III.), although the giant's vomit has disappeared. The *Tales of Terror*, 1801, were by Matthew Gregory Lewis, "Monk Lewis," as he was called, and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, by Mrs. Radcliffe.]

LETTER 169

CHARLES LAMB TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated at end: March 12, 1808.]

DEAR Sir,—Wordsworth breakfasts with me on Tuesday morning next; he goes to Mrs. Clarkson the next day, and will be glad to meet you before he goes. Can you come to us before nine or at nine that morning? I am afraid, *W.* is so engaged with Coleridge, who is ill, we cannot have him in an evening. If I do not hear from you, I will expect you to breakfast on Tuesday.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Saturday, 12 Mar., 1808.

NOTE

[This is the first letter to Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867), whom Lamb was destined to know very intimately, and to whose *Diary* we are indebted for much of our information concerning the Lambs. Robinson, who was only a month younger than Lamb, had been connected with the *Times* as foreign correspondent and foreign editor; in November, 1809, he gave up journalism and began to keep his terms at the Middle Temple, rising in time to be leader of the Norfolk Circuit. We shall see much more of him. He knew Lamb well enough to accompany him, his sister and Hazlitt to "Mr. H." in December, 1806.

Wordsworth left on April 3, by which time Coleridge was sufficiently recovered to give two more lectures. The series closed in June. Coleridge then went to Bury St. Edmunds to see the Clarksons, and then to Grasmere, to the Wordsworths. His separation from Mrs. Coleridge had already occurred, he and his wife remaining, however, on friendly terms.]

LETTER 170

MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[P.M. March 16, 1808.]

MY dear Sarah,—Do not be very angry that I have not written to you. I have promised your brother to be at your wedding, and that favor you must accept as an atonement for my offences—you have been in no want of correspondence lately, and I wished to leave you both to your own inventions.

The border you are working for me I prize at a very high rate because I consider it as the last work you can do for me, the time so fast approaching when you must no longer work for your friends. Yet my old fault of giving away presents has not left me, and I am desirous of even giving away this your last gift. I had intended to have given it away without your knowledge, but I have intrusted my secret to Hazlitt, and I suppose it will not remain a secret long, so I condescend to consult you. It is to Miss Hazlitt, to whose superior claim I wish to give up my right to this precious worked border. Her brother William is her great favorite, and she would be pleased to possess his bride's last work. Are you not to give the fellow-border to one sister-in-law, and therefore has she not a just claim to it?—I never heard in the annals of weddings (since the days of Nausicaa, and she only washed her old gowns for that purpose) that the brides ever furnished the apparel of their maids. Besides, I can be completely clad in your work without it, for the spotted muslin will serve both for cap and hat (Nota bene, my hat is the same as yours) and the gown you sprigged for me has never been made up, therefore I can wear that—Or, if you like better, I will make up a new silk which Manning has sent me from China. Manning would like to hear I wore it for the first time at your wedding. It is a very pretty light colour, but there is an objection (besides not being your work and that is a very serious objection) and that is, Mrs. Hazlitt tells me that all Winterslow would be in an uproar if the bridemaid was to be dressed in anything but white, and although it is a very light colour I confess we

cannot call it white, being a sort of a dead-whiteish-bloom colour; then silk, perhaps, in a morning is not so proper, though the occasion, so joyful, might justify a full dress. Determine for me in this perplexity between the sprig and the China-Manning silk. But do not contradict my whim about Miss Hazlitt having the border, for I have set my heart upon the matter: if you agree with me in this I shall think you have forgiven me for giving away your pin; and that was a *mad* trick, but I had many obligations and no money. I repent me of the deed, wishing I had it now to send to Miss H. with the border, and I cannot, will not, give her the Doctor's pin, for having never had any presents from gentlemen in my young days, I highly prize all they now give me, thinking my latter days are better than my former.

You must send this same border in your own name to Miss Hazlitt, which will save me the disgrace of giving away your gift, and make it amount merely to a civil refusal.

I shall have no present to give you on your marriage, nor do I expect that I shall be rich enough to give anything to baby at the first christening, but at the second, or third child's I hope to have a coral or so to spare out of my own earnings. Do not ask me to be Godmother, for I have an objection to that—but there is I believe, no serious duties attached to a bride's maid, therefore I come with a willing mind, bringing nothing with me but many wishes, and not a few hopes, and a very little of fears of happy years to come.

I am dear Sarah

Yours ever most affectionately

M. Lamb.

What has Charles done that nobody invites him to the wedding?

Note

[The wedding was on May 1, 1808. Originally it was intended to perform the ceremony at Winterslow, but London was actually the place: St. Andrew's, Holborn. Mary Lamb was a bridesmaid and Charles Lamb was present. He told Southey in a letter some years after: "I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Anything awful makes me laugh."

The episode of Nausicaa, to which Mary Lamb refers, had just been rewritten by Charles Lamb in the *Adventures of Ulysses*.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to George Dyer (see Appendix II., page 970), which states that Coleridge is Bury'd; that is, at Bury St. Edmunds, and that the *Dramatic Specimens* has been published, but not *Ulysses* yet. Lamb says that he will

give both to Dyer rather than let him buy them, since half-guinea books were never calculated for his friends. A few remarks follow about Hazlitt and certain painters turning poets and encroaching on Lamb and Dyer's province.]

LETTER 171

MARY AND CHARLES LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT (LATE STODDART)

December 10th, 1808.

MY dear Sarah,—I hear of you from your brother; but you do not write yourself, nor does Hazlitt. I beg that one or both of you will amend this fault as speedily as possible, for I am very anxious to hear of your health. I hope, as you say nothing about your fall to your brother, you are perfectly recovered from the effects of it.

You cannot think how very much we miss you and H. of a Wednesday evening. All the glory of the night, I may say, is at an end. Phillips makes his jokes, and there is no one to applaud him; Rickman argues, and there is no one to oppose him.

The worst miss of all to me is, that, when we are in the dismals, there is now no hope of relief from any quarter whatsoever. Hazlitt was most brilliant, most ornamental, as a Wednesday-man; but he was a more useful one on common days, when he dropt in after a quarrel or a fit of the glooms. The Sheffington is quite out now, my brother having got drunk with claret and Tom Sheridan. This visit, and the occasion of it, is a profound secret, and therefore I tell it to nobody but you and Mrs. Reynolds. Through the medium of Wroughton, there came an invitation and proposal from T. S., that C. L. should write some scenes in a speaking pantomime, the other parts of which Tom now, and his father formerly, have manufactured between them. So, in the Christmas holydays, my brother and his two great associates, we expect, will be all three damned together: this is, I mean, if Charles's share, which is done and sent in, is accepted.

I left this unfinished yesterday, in the hope that my brother would have done it for me: his reason for refusing me was 'no exquisite reason;' for it was, because he must write a letter to Manning in three or four weeks, and therefore he could not be always writing letters, he said. I wanted him to tell your husband about a great work which Godwin is going to publish, to enlighten the world once more, and I shall not be able to make out what it

is. He (Godwin) took his usual walk one evening, a fortnight since, to the end of Hatton Garden and back again. During that walk, a thought came into his mind, which he instantly set down and improved upon, till he brought it, in seven or eight days, into the compass of a reasonable sized pamphlet. To propose a subscription to all well disposed people, to raise a certain sum of money, to be expended in the care of a cheap monument for the former and the future great dead men,—the monument to be a white cross, with a wooden slab at the end, telling their names and qualifications. This wooden slab and white cross to be perpetuated to the end of time. To survive the fall of empires and the destruction of cities by means of a map, which was, in case of an insurrection among the people, or any other cause by which a city or country may be destroyed, to be carefully preserved; and then, when things got again into their usual order, the white-cross-wooden-slab-makers were to go to work again, and set them in their former places. This, as nearly as I can tell you, is the sum and substance of it, but it is written remarkably well, in his very best manner; for the proposal (which seems to me very like throwing salt on a sparrow's tail to catch him) occupies but half a page, which is followed by very fine writing on the benefits he conjectures would follow if it were done. Very excellent thoughts on death, and on our feelings concerning dead friends, and the advantages an old country has over a new one, even in the slender memorials we have of great men who once flourished.

Charles is come home, and wants his dinner; and so the dead men must be no more thought on: tell us how you go on, and how you like Winterslow and winter evenings.

Noales [Knowles] has not got back again, but he is in better spirits. John Hazlitt was here on Wednesday, very sober.

Our love to Hazlitt.

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

[*Charles Lamb adds*:—]

Saturday.

There came this morning a printed prospectus from S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere, of a weekly paper, to be called The Friend—a flaming prospectus—I have no time to give the heads of it—to commence first Saturday in January. There came also a notice of a Turkey from Mr. Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy.

C. Lamb.

NOTE

["The Sheffington." I have no notion what this word means. Lamb's share of the speaking pantomime for the Sheridans has vanished. We do not even know if it were ever accepted.

The late Mr. Charles Kent, in his Centenary Edition of Lamb's works, printed a comic opera, said, on the authority of P. G. Patmore, to be Lamb's, and identified it with the experiment mentioned by Mary Lamb. But an examination of the manuscript, which is in the British Museum, convinces me that the writing is not Lamb's, while the matter has nothing characteristic in it. Tom Sheridan, by the way, was just a month younger than Lamb.

"No exquisite reason." Sir Andrew Aguecheek's phrase ("Twelfth Night," II., 3, 157).

Godwin's new book was the *Essay on Sepulchres*, 1809.

Noales was probably James Sheridan Knowles (1784-1862), the dramatist, a protégé of Hazlitt's father. We shall meet him again in the correspondence. After serving as a soldier and practising medicine he had gone on the stage. Several years later he became one of Lamb's friends.

The Friend, which probably had been in Coleridge's thoughts for some time, was announced to begin on the first Saturday in January. Lamb's scepticism was justified; the first number came out on June 1.]

LETTER 172

MARY AND CHARLES LAMB TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

[P.M. Dec. (10), 1808.]

MY dear Mrs. Clarkson—I feel myself greatly indebted to Mr. Clarkson for his care about our direction, since it has procured us the pleasure of a line from you. Why are we all, my dear friend, so unwilling to sit down and write a letter when we all so well know the great satisfaction it is to hear of the welfare of an absent friend? I began to think that you and all I connect in my mind with you were gone from us for ever——Coleridge in a manner gave us up when he was in town, and we have now lost all traces of him. At the time he was in town I received two letters from Miss Wordsworth, which I never answered because I would not complain to her of our old friend. As this has never been explained to her it must seem very strange, more particularly so, as Miss Hutchinson & Mrs. Wordsworth were in an ill state

of health at the time. Will you some day soon write a few words just to tell me how they all are and all you know concerning them?

Do not imagine that I am now *complaining* to you of Coleridge. Perhaps we are both in fault, we expect *too much*, and he gives *too little*. We ought many years ago to have understood each other better. Nor is it quite all over with us yet, for he will some day or other come in with the same old face, and receive (after a few spiteful words from me) the same warm welcome as ever. But we could not submit to sit as hearers at his lectures and not be permitted to see our old friend when *school-hours* were over. I beg you will not let what I have said give you a moment's thought, nor pray do not mention it to the Wordsworths nor to Coleridge, for I know he thinks I am apt to speak unkindly of him. I am not good tempered, and I have two or three times given him proofs that I am not. You say you are all in your "better way," which is a very chearful hearing, for I trust you mean to include that your health is *bettering* too. I look forward with great pleasure to the near approach of Christmas and Mr. Clarkson. And now the turkey you are so kind as to promise us comes into my head & tells me it is so very near that if writing before then should happen to be the least irksome to you, I will be content to wait for intelligence of our old friends till I have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Clarkson in town. I ought to say this because I know at times how dreadfully irksome writing a letter is to me, even when I have no reason in the world to give why it is so, and I remember I have heard you express something of the same kind of feelings.

I try to remember something to enquire after at Bury—The lady we visited, the cherry tree Tom and I robbed, Tom my partner in the robbery (Mr. Thomas C—— I suppose now), and your Cook maid that was so kind to me, are all at present I can recollect. Of all the places I ever saw Bury has made the liveliest impression on my memory. I have a very indistinct recollection of the Lakes.

Charles joins with me in affectionate remembrances to you all, and he is more warm in his expressions of gratitude for the turkey because he is fonder of good eating than I am, though I am not amiss in that way.

God bless you my kind friends

I remain yours affectionately

M. Lamb.

Excuse this slovenly letter, if I were to write it over again I should abridge it one half.

Saturday morning
No. 16 Mitre Court Buildings
Inner Temple.

[*Charles Lamb adds*:—]

We have this moment received a very chearful letter from Coleridge, who is now at Grasmere. It contains a prospectus for a new weekly publication to be called *The Friend*. He says they are well there, and in good spirits & that he has not been so well for a long time.

The Prospectus is of a weekly paper of a miscellaneous nature to be call'd the Friend & to come out, the first number, the first Saturday in January. Those who remember *The Watchman* will not be very sanguine in expecting a regular fulfillment of this Prophecy. But C. writes in delightful spirits, & *if ever*, he may *now* do this thing. I suppose he will send you a Prospectus. I had some thought of inclosing mine. But I want to shew it about. My kindest remembr^c^ to Mr. C. & thanks for the turkey.

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Coleridge, after delivering his lectures, had gone to Bury on a visit to the Clarksons. He then passed on to Grasmere, to Wordsworth's new house, Allan Bank, and settled down to project *The Friend*.

Tom Clarkson, with whom Mary Lamb robbed a cherry tree, became a metropolitan magistrate. He died in 1837.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, dated February 25, 1809, not available for this edition. It tells Lloyd where to look for Lamb when he reached town—at 16 Mitre Court Buildings, which he is leaving at Lady Day, or at 2 or 4 Inner Temple Lane. "Drury Lane Theatre is burnt to the ground." Robert Lloyd spent a short while in London in the spring of 1809 and saw the Lambs, Godwin, Captain Burney, James White and other persons. His letters to his wife describing these experiences, printed in *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*, are amusingly fresh and enthusiastic.]

LETTER 173

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

28th March, 1809.

DEAR Manning,—I sent you a long letter by the ships which sailed the beginning of last month, accompanied with books, &c. Since I last wrote, Holcroft is dead. He died on Thursday last.[1]

[1] [See Appendix II., page 970.]

So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again! Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney, to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets; and besides, that which I refer to above is a very long one; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre Court Buildings. We are at 34, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and shall be here till about the end of May: then we remove to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I mean to live and die; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the King, if I was not indulged with non-residence. What a dislocation of comfort is comprised in that word moving! Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart: old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul; they'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Was I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination,—I don't mean the grave, but No. 2 [4] Inner Temple Lane,—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hare Court, with three trees and a pump in it. Do you know it? I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs. Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my life like it. Thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives, of Mrs. Clarke, in every blind alley. Yet in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know in Kensington, being asked a question about the progress of the examination in the House, inquired who Mrs. Clarke was? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificancy! The Duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of

the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book, and of Coleridge's prospectus, in my last; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no conveniency of doing it by this. Mrs. —— grows every day in disfavour with God and man. I will be buried with this inscription over me:—"Here lies C. L., the Woman-hater"—I mean that hated ONE WOMAN: for the rest, God bless them, and when he makes any more, make 'em prettier. How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them? This is Wednesday. On Wednesdays is my levee. The Captain, Martin, Phillips, (not the Sheriff,) Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you? C. LAMB, &c.

NOTE

[Thomas Holcroft died on March 23, 1809, aged sixty-three.

Mitre Court Buildings, Southampton Buildings and Inner Temple Lane (Lamb's homes) have all been rebuilt since Lamb's day.

"That word 'moving.'" Lamb later elaborated and condensed this passage, in the *Elia* essay "New Year's Eve": "Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household-gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood."

"Mrs. Clarke." Mary Anne Clarke (1776-1852), mistress of the Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief, whose reception of money from officers as a return for procuring them preferment or promising to, by her influence with the Duke, had just been exposed in Parliament, and was causing immense excitement.

"Godwin's little book." This may have been the *Essay on Sepulchres*. Godwin's Lives of Edward and John Phillips, Milton's nephews, appeared also at this time.

"Mrs. ——." Most probably Mrs. Godwin once more.

"Not the Sheriff." Alluding to Sir Richard Phillips, the publisher, who was elected Sheriff of London in 1807, and was knighted in 1808.]

LETTER 174

CHARLES LAMB TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated by H. C. R.: May, 1809.]

DEAR Sir,—Would you be so kind as, when you go to the Times office, to see about an Advertisement which My Landlady's Daughter left for insertion about ten days since and has not appeared, for a Governesses Place? The references are to Thorpe & Graves 18 Lower Holborn, and to M. B. 115 Oxford St. Though not anxious about attitudes, she pines for a situation. I got home tolerably well, as I hear, the other evening. It may be a warning to any one in future to ask me to a dinner party. I always disgrace myself. I floated up stairs on the Coachman's back, like Ariel; "On a bat's back I do fly, After sunset merrily."

In sobriety
I am
Yours truly
C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Lamb used the simile of Ariel at least twice afterwards: at the close of the *Elia* essay "Rejoicings on the New Year's Coming-of-Age," and in Letter 489, on page 844, to J. V. Asbury of Enfield, the Lambs' doctor.]

LETTER 175

MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

[June 2, 1809.]

"YOU may write to Hazlitt, that I will *certainly* go to Winterslough, as my Father has agreed to give me 5l. to bear my expences, and has given leave that I may stop till that is spent, leaving enough to defray my Carriage on the 14th July."

So far Martin has written, and further than that I can give you no intelligence, for I do not yet know Phillips's intentions; nor can I tell you the exact time when we can come; nor can I positively say we shall come at all; for we have scruples of conscience about there being so many of us.

Martin says, if you can borrow a blanket or two, he can sleep on the floor, without either bed or mattress, which would save his

expences at the Hut; for, if Phillips breakfasts there, he must do so too, which would swallow up all his money. And he and I have calculated that, if he has no Inn expences, he may as well spare that money to give you for a part of his roast beef.

We can spare you also just five pounds. You are not to say this to Hazlitt, lest his delicacy should be alarmed; but I tell you what Martin and I have planned, that, if you happen to be empty pursed at this time, you may think it as well to make him up a bed in the best kitchen.

I think it very probable that Phillips will come; and, if you do not like such a croud of us, for they both talk of staying a whole month, tell me so, and we will put off our visit till next summer.

The 14th July is the day Martin has fixed for *coming*. I should have written before, if I could have got a positive answer from them.

Thank you very much for the good work you have done for me. Mrs. Stoddart also thanks you for the gloves. How often must I tell you never to do any needle work for any body but me?

Martin Burney has been very ill, and still is very weak and pale. Mrs. Holcroft and all her children, and all her scholars, have had the measles. Your old friend, Mrs. Fenwick, is in town.

We are going to see Mrs. Martin and her daughter, Mrs. Fulton (Sarah Martin), and I expect to see there the future husband of Louisa. It will be a charming evening, doubtless.

I cannot write any more, for we have got a noble Life of Lord Nelson lent us for a short time by my poor relation the book binder, and I want to read as much of it as I can.

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

On reading Martin's note over again, we guess the Captain means him to stay only a fortnight. It is most likely we shall come the beginning of July.

Saturday [? June 3].

Note

[The Lambs were proposing to spend their holidays with the Hazlitts, in July, and to take Colonel Phillips and his nephew Martin Burney with them. (Or possibly it was the other Phillips.) As it happened, however, Mary Lamb was taken ill almost immediately after writing this letter, and the visit had to be postponed until September and October.

The Hut was the Winterslow inn.

"My poor relation the book binder." See Letter 415.]

LETTER 176

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

June 7th, 1809.

DEAR Coleridge,—I congratulate you on the appearance of "The Friend." Your first number promises well, and I have no doubt the succeeding numbers will fulfil the promise. I had a kind letter from you some time since, which I have left unanswered. I am also obliged to you, I believe, for a review in the "Annual," am I not? The "Monthly Review" sneers at me, and asks "if 'Comus' is not *good enough* for Mr. Lamb?" because I have said no good serious dramas have been written since the death of Charles the First, except "Samson Agonistes"; so because they do not know, or won't remember, that "Comus" was written long before, I am to be set down as an undervaluer of Milton! O Coleridge, do kill those reviews, or they will kill us—kill all we like! Be a friend to all else, but their foe. I have been turned out of my chambers in the Temple by a landlord who wanted them for himself; but I have got other at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, &c., and all for £30 a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following, Mary was taken ill with fatigue of moving, and affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home; she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she has a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life—out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may not have many years to live together! I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by and bye. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that it's like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but, alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion. They are in their infancy to me; I do not feel them yet; no hearth has blazed to them yet. How I hate and dread new places!

I was very glad to see Wordsworth's book advertised; I am to have it to-morrow lent me, and if Wordsworth don't send me an order for one upon Longman, I will buy it. It is greatly extolled and liked by all who have seen it. Let me hear from some of you, for I am desolate. I shall have to send you, in a week or two, two volumes of Juvenile Poetry, done by Mary and me within the last

six months, and that tale in prose which Wordsworth so much liked, which was published at Christmas, with nine others, by us, and has reached a second edition. There's for you! We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think of a drama, but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all. I am quite aground for a plan, and I must do something for money. Not that I have immediate wants, but I have prospective ones. O money, money, how blindly thou hast been worshipped, and how stupidly abused! Thou art health, and liberty, and strength; and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the foul fiend!

Nevertheless, do not understand by this that I have not quite enough for my occasions for a year or two to come. While I think on it, Coleridge, I fetch'd away my books which you had at the "Courier" Office, and found all but a third volume of the old plays, containing "The White Devil," "Green's Tu Quoque," and the "Honest Whore,"—perhaps the most valuable volume of them all—*that* I could not find. Pray, if you can, remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps; send me word; for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set. I found two other volumes (you had three), the "Arcadia," and "Daniel," enriched with manuscript notes. I wish every book I have were so noted. They have thoroughly converted me to relish Daniel, or to say I relish him, for, after all, I believe I did relish him. You well call him sober-minded. Your notes are excellent. Perhaps you've forgot them. I have read a review in the "Quarterly," by Southey, on the Missionaries, which is most masterly. I only grudge it being there. It is quite beautiful. Do remember my Dodsley; and pray do write, or let some of you write. Clarkson tells me you are in a smoky house. Have you cured it? It is hard to cure anything of smoking. Our little poems are but humble, but they have no name. You must read them, remembering they were task-work; and perhaps you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many. Have you read "Cœlebs?" It has reached eight editions in so many weeks; yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels, with the draw-back of dull religion in it. Had the religion been high and flavoured, it would have been something. I borrowed this "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife" of a very careful, neat lady, and returned it with this stuff written in the beginning:—

"If ever I marry a wife
I'd marry a landlord's daughter,
For then I may sit in the bar,
And drink cold brandy-and-water."

I don't expect you can find time from your "Friend" to write to me much, but write something, for there has been a long silence. You know Holcroft is dead. Godwin is well. He has written a very pretty, absurd book about sepulchres. He was affronted because I told him it was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir T. Browne. This letter is all about books; but my head aches, and I hardly know what I write; but I could not let "The Friend" pass without a congratulatory epistle. I won't criticise till it comes to a volume. Tell me how I shall send my packet to you? —by what conveyance?—by Longman, Short-man, or how? Give my kindest remembrances to Wordsworth. Tell him he must give me a book. My kind love to Mrs. W. and to Dorothy separately and conjointly. I wish you could all come and see me in my new rooms. God bless you all. C. L.

NOTE

[The first number of *The Friend* was dated June 1, 1809.

Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens* had been reviewed in the *Annual Review* for 1808, with discrimination and approval (see Vol. IV. of this edition, page 600), but whether or not by Coleridge I do not know.

Wordsworth's book was his pamphlet on the "Convention of Cintra."

The Juvenile Poetry was *Poetry for Children. Entirely Original.* By the author of *Mrs. Leicester's School.* In two volumes. 1809. *Mrs. Leicester's School*, 1809, had been published a little before. Wordsworth's favourite tale was Arabella Hardy's "The Sea Voyage."

I know nothing of the annotated copy of Sidney's *Arcadia.* Daniel's *Poetical Works*, 12mo, 1718, two volumes, with marginalia by Lamb and Coleridge, is still preserved. The copy of Hannah More's *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*, 1809, with Lamb's verses, is not, I think, now known.

Southey's missionary article was in the first number of the *Quarterly*, February, 1809.

Hervey wrote *Meditations among the Tombs*; Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Burial.*

Here should come four letters from Lamb to Charles Lloyd, Senior, not available for this edition. They are all printed in *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds.* The first, dated June 13, 1809, contains an interesting criticism of a translation of the twenty-fourth book of the *Iliad*, which Charles Lloyd, the father of Robert Lloyd, had made. Lamb says that what he misses, and misses also in Pope, is a savage-like plainness of speaking.

"The heroes in Homer are not half civilized—they utter all the cruel, all the selfish, all the *mean thoughts* even of their nature, which it is the fashion of our great men to keep in."

Mr. Lloyd had translated ἀοιδοὺς (line 720) "minstrels." Lamb says "minstrels I suspect to be a word bringing merely English or English ballad feelings to the Mind. It expresses the thing and something more, as to say Sarpedon was a Gentleman, or as somebody translated Paul's address, 'Ye men of Athens,' 'Gentlemen of Athens.'"

The second letter, dated June 19, 1809, continues the subject. Lamb writes: "I am glad to see you venture *made* and *maid* for rhymes. 'Tis true their sound is the same. But the mind occupied in revolving the different meaning of two words so literally the same, is diverted from the objection which the mere Ear would make, and to the mind it is rhyme enough."

In the third letter, dated July 31, 1809, Lamb remarks of translators of Homer, that Cowper delays one as much, walking over a Bowling Green, as Milton does, travelling over steep Alpine heights.

The fourth letter, undated, accompanies criticisms of Mr. Lloyd's translation of the *Odyssey*, Books 1 and 2. Mr. Lloyd had translated *βοῦς 'Ηελίοιο* (Book 1, line 8) "Bullocks of the Sun." Lamb wrote: "OXEN of the Sun, I conjure. Bullocks is too Smithfield and sublunary a Word. Oxen of the Sun, or of Apollo, but in any case not Bullocks."

With a letter to Robert Lloyd, belonging to this year, Lamb sends *Poetry for Children*, and states that the poem "The Beggar Man" is by his brother, John Lamb.]

LETTER 177

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Monday, Oct. 30th, 1809.

DEAR Coleridge,—I have but this moment received your letter, dated the 9th instant, having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a-day; have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole. We came back to our Hogarth Room—I have made several acquisitions since you saw them,—and found Nos. 8, 9, 10 of "The Friend." The account of Luther in the Warteburg

I don't expect y
to me much, but w
You know Holcr
a very pretty, ab
because I told hin
Sir T. Browne. "I
and I hardly know
pass without a
comes to a volum
—by what conve
my kindest reme
me a book. My
and conjointly.
rooms. God bl

[The first nu
Lamb's *Dra*
Review for 18
this edition, p
know.

Wordsworth
Cintra."

The Juveni
inal. By th
1809. *Mrs.*
before. W
Sea Voyage.

I know
Daniel's *Po*
alia by Lan
More's *Cos*
not, I thin
Southey
Quarterly
Hervey
Browne, *I*
Here s
Senior, n
Charles
contains
fourth b
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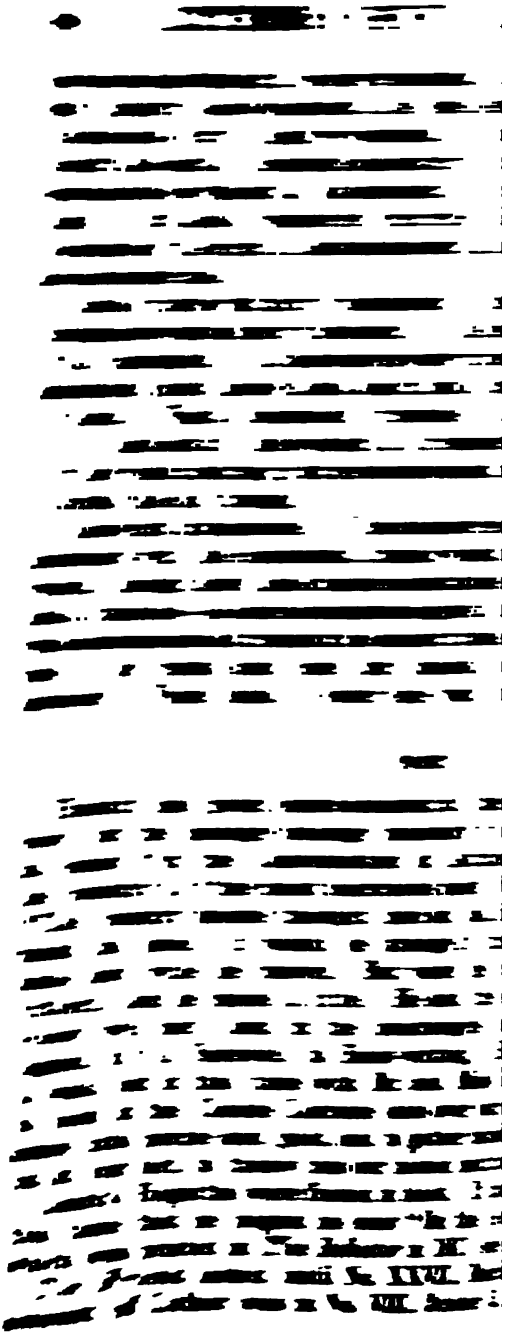

upported financially as he had hoped, and had already
of stopping the paper.

Howland Beaumont (1753-1827), of Coleorton, the
tron of men of genius, had helped, with Sotheby,
hment of *The Friend*, and was instrumental subse-
curing a pension for Coleridge. William Sotheby
he translator and author, had received subscriptions
lectures.

Auditors in Albemarle Street"—those who had
oleridge's lectures at the Royal Institution.

phlet." Presumably Wordsworth's "Convention of

er saw a book-case." Leigh Hunt wrote of Lamb's
essay "My Books," in *The Literary Examiner*:—

what it is, a selection made at precious intervals from the book-stalls;
r at nine and twopence; now a Montaigne or a Sir Thomas Browne
s; now a Jeremy Taylor, a Spinoza; an old English Dramatist,
Philip Sidney; and the books are "neat as imported." The very
acks is a "discipline of humanity." There Mr. Southey takes his
h an old Radical friend: there Jeremy Collier is at peace with Dryden:
Martin Luther, lies down with the Quaker lamb, Sewel: there Guz-
ne thinks himself fit company for Sir Charles Grandison, and has his
ed. Even the "high fantastical" Duchess of Newcastle, with her
ead, is received with grave honours, and not the less for declining to
f with the constitutions of her maids.]

LETTER 178

MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

November 7th, 1809.

dear Sarah—The dear, quiet, lazy, delicious month we
spent with you is remembered by me with such regret,
el quite discontent & Winterslow-sick. I assure you, I
sed such a pleasant time in the country in my life, both in
& out of it, the card playing quarrels, and a few gasp-
breath after your swift footsteps up the high hills excepted,
e drawbacks are not unpleasant in the recollection. We
some salt butter to make our toast seem like yours, and
tried to eat meat suppers, but that would not do, for we
appetites behind us; and the dry loaf, which offended you,
les in at night unaccompanied; but, sorry am I to add, it
followed by the pipe and the gin bottle. We smoked the
st night of our arrival.

Great news! I have just been interrupted by Mr. Daw, who comes to tell me he was yesterday elected a Royal Academician. He said none of his own friends voted for him; he got it by strangers, who were pleased with his picture of Mrs. White. Charles says he does not believe Northcote ever voted for the admission of any one. Though a very cold day, Daw was in a prodigious sweat, for joy at his good fortune.

More great news! my beautiful green curtains were put up yesterday, and all the doors listed with green baize, and four new boards put to the coal-hole, and fastening hasps put to the window, and my died Manning silk cut out.

Yesterday was an eventful day: for yesterday too Martin Burney was to be examined by Lord Eldon, previous to his being admitted as an Attorney; but he has not yet been here to announce his success.

I carried the baby-caps to Mrs. [John] Hazlitt; she was much pleased, and vastly thankful. Mr. [John] H. got fifty-four guineas at Rochester, and has now several pictures in hand.

I am going to tell you a secret, for —— says she would be sorry to have it talked of. One night —— came home from the ale-house, bringing with him a great, rough, ill-looking fellow, whom he introduced to —— as Mr. Brown, a gentleman he had hired as a mad keeper, to take care of him, at forty pounds a year, being ten pounds under the usual price for keepers, which sum Mr. Brown had agreed to remit out of pure friendship. It was with great difficulty, and by threatening to call in the aid of watchmen and constables, that —— could prevail on Mr. Brown to leave the house.

We had a good chearful meeting on Wednesday: much talk of Winterslow, its woods & its nice sun flowers. I did not so much like Phillips at Winterslow, as I now like him for having been with us at Winterslow. We roasted the last of his 'beach, of oily nut prolific,' on Friday, at the Captain's. Nurse is now established in Paradise, *alias* the Incurable Ward [of Westminster Hospital]. I have seen her sitting in most superb state, surrounded by her seven incurable companions. They call each other ladies. Nurse looks as if she would be considered as the first lady in the ward: only one seemed at [all] like to rival her in dignity.

A man in the India House has resigned, by which Charles will get twenty pounds a year; and White has prevailed on him to write some more lottery-puffs. If that ends in smoke, the twenty pounds is a sure card, and has made us very joyful.

I continue very well, & return you very sincere thanks for my good health and improved looks, which have almost made Mrs. Godwin die with envy; she longs to come to Winterslow as much

as the spiteful elder sister did to go to the well for a gift to spit diamonds—

Jane and I have agreed to boil a round of beef for your suppers, when you come to town again. She, Jane, broke two of the Hogarth glasses while we were away—whereat I made a great noise.

Farewel. Love to William, and Charles's love and good wishes for the speedy arrival of the Life of Holcroft, & the bearer thereof.

Yours most affectionately,

M. Lamb.

Tuesday.

Charles told Mrs. Godwin, Hazlitt had found a well in his garden, which, water being scarce in your country, would bring him in two hundred a year; and she came in great haste the next morning to ask me if it were true. Your brother and his &c. are quite well.

Note

[George Dawe had just been elected not Royal Academician but Associate. He became full R.A. in 1814.

Mrs. White was the wife of Anthony White, the surgeon, who had been apprenticed to Sir Anthony Carlisle.

Northcote was James Northcote, R.A., whose *Conversations* Hazlitt recorded some years later.

Martin Burney never made a successful lawyer. His life was destined to be unhappy and unprofitable, as we shall see later.

"I am going to tell you a secret." In the absence of the original these blanks cannot be filled in, nor are they important.

"Beach, of oily nut prolific." From Cowper's *Task*, "The Sofa," lines 315, 316.

"Lottery puffs." See note on page 326.

"The spiteful elder sister." This story is in Grimm, I think.

"The *Life of Holcroft*." The *Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft*, begun by Holcroft and finished by Hazlitt, although completed in 1810, was not published until 1816.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Robert Lloyd, dated January 1, 1810, thanking him for a turkey. Lamb mentions that his 1809 holiday had been spent in Wiltshire, where he saw Salisbury Cathedral and Stonehenge. He adds that Coleridge's *Friend* is occasionally sublime.

This was the last letter of the correspondence. Robert Lloyd died on October 26, 1811. Lamb wrote in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a memoir of him, which will be found in Vol. I. of this edition, page 132.]

LETTER 179

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

Jan. 2nd, 1810.

Mary sends her love.

DEAR Manning,—When I last wrote to you, I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them; but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous use of the post——s which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c., rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent—cold with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last, to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to "Mrs. Leicester;" the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life—I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour: and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb, Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb of Stamford;[1] 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in

[1] Where my family come from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice.

our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing but the Lamb of God. Puns I have not made many (nor punch much), since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral; upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp-set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. Do you know Kate * * * * * * * * *. I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (turkey in Europe and turkey in Asia), that I can't jog on. It is New-Year here. That is, it was New-Year half a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them.[1] The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill at half past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. Have you trampled on the Cross yet? The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they, come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know Kate * * * * * * * * *. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one, but if ever one star differed from another in glory ——. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly numbers, called the "Friend," which I would send, if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before deters me; and you'll want something new to read when you come home. It is chiefly intended to puff off Wordsworth's poetry; but there are some noble things in it by the by. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

"She's sweet Fifteen,
I'm *one year more*."

Mrs. Bland sung it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland's.

[1] [See Appendix II., page 971.]

That glorious singer Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel, yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which predominated; but he is gone, and one Phillips is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B * * * * * * is always to be met with!

> "Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;
> And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives."

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show anybody the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private*. Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language, but the *grey mare is the better horse*. I don't allude to Mrs. Godwin, but to the word *grammar*, which comes near to *grey mare*, if you observe, in sound. That figure is called paranomasia in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. "Ah! sir," said she, "I have seen better days;" "So have I, good woman," I replied; but I meant literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr. Dawe is made associate of the Royal Academy. By what law of association I can't guess. Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs. Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton, Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you. [*Rest cut away.*]

NOTE

["I have published a little book." This was, of course, an invention. In the *Elia* essay on "Poor Relations" Lamb says that his father's boyhood was spent at Lincoln, and in Susan Yates' story in *Mrs. Leicester's School* we see the Lincolnshire fens, but of the history of the family we know nothing. I fancy Stamford is a true touch.

"The Persian ambassador." A portrait of this splendid person is preserved at the India Office. Leigh Hunt says that Dyer was among the pilgrims to Primrose Hill.

"Kate * * * * * * * * *." I have not identified this young lady.

"The old pathetic ballad." I have not found this.

"Mrs. Bland." Maria Theresa Bland (1769-1838), a Jewess, and a mezzo-soprano famous in simple ballads, who was connected with Drury Lane for many years.

"Braham is fled." Braham did not sing in London in 1810, but joined Mrs. Billington in a long provincial tour. Phillips was Thomas Philipps (1774-1841), singer and composer.

"Miss B * * * * * *." Miss Burrell. See note on page 513.

"Not my poetry, but Quarles's." In "An Elegie," Stanza 16. Lamb does not quote quite correctly.

"Hazlitt's grammar." *A New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue . . . by William Hazlitt, to which is added A New Guide to the English Tongue by E[dward] Baldwin* (William Godwin). Published by M. J. Godwin. 1810.

"A woman begged of me." Lamb told this story at the end of his *Elia* essay "A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars," in the *London Magazine*, June, 1822, but the passage was not reprinted in book form. See Vol. II. of this edition, page 387.

George Dawe was made A.R.A. in 1809, not R.A. until 1814.

Of the friends on Lamb's list we have already met several. Mr. and Mrs. Norris were the Randal Norrises. Dr. Stoddart having left Malta was now practising in Doctors Commons. Mr. and Mrs. Collier were the John Dyer Colliers, the parents of John Payne Collier, who introduced Lamb to Henry Crabb Robinson. Both Colliers were journalists. We meet some Buffams later, in the Moxon correspondence. Mr. Marshall was Godwin's friend. Of Mrs. Lum, Mr. Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Colonel and Mrs. Harwood, and Mr. Sutton, I know nothing.]

LETTER 180

CHARLES LAMB TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated by H. C. R. Feb. 7, 1810.]

D[R] R.—My Brother whom you have met at my rooms (a plump good looking man of seven and forty!) has written a book about humanity, which I transmit to you herewith. Wilson the Publisher has put it in his head that you can get it Reviewed for him. I dare say it is not in the scope of your Review—but if you could put it in any likely train, he would rejoyce. For alas! our boasted Humanity partakes of Vanity. As it is, he teazes me to death with chusing to suppose that I could get it into all the Reviews at a moment's notice—I!! who have been set up as a mark for them to throw at, and would willingly consign them all to Hell flames and Megæra's snaky locks.

But here's the Book—and don't shew it Mrs. Collier, for I remember she makes excellent Eel soup, and the leading points of the Book are directed against that very process.

Yours truly C. Lamb.

At Home to-night—Wednesday [February 7].

Note

[Addressed to "Henry Robinson, Esq., 56 Hatton Garden, 'with a Treatise on Cruelty to Animals.'"

Lamb's brother, John Lamb, who was born in 1763, was now Accountant of the South-Sea House. His character is described by Lamb in the *Elia* essay "My Relations," where he figures as James Elia. Robinson's *Diary* later frequently expresses Robinson's dislike of his dogmatic ways.

The pamphlet has been identified by Mr. L. S. Livingston as *A Letter to the Right Hon. William Windham, on his opposition to Lord Erskine's Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.* It was published by Maxwell & Wilson at 17 Skinner Street in 1810. No author's name is given. One copy only is known, and that is in America, and the owner declines to permit it to be reprinted. The particular passage referring to eel pie runs thus:—

"If an eel had the wisdom of Solomon, he could not help himself in the ill-usage that befalls him; but if he had, and were told, that it was necessary for our subsistence that he should be eaten, that he must be skinned first, and then broiled; if ignorant of man's usual practice, he would conclude that the cook would so far use her reason as to cut off his head first, which is not fit for food, as then he might be skinned and broiled without harm; for however the other parts of his body might be convulsed during the culinary operations, there could be no feeling of consciousness therein, the communication with the brain being cut off; but if the woman were immediately to stick a fork into his eye, skin him alive, coil him up in a skewer, head and all, so that in the extremest agony he could not move, and forthwith broil him to death: then were the same Almighty Power that formed man from the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, to call the eel into a new existence, with a knowledge of the treatment he had undergone, and he found that the instinctive disposition which man has in common with other carnivorous animals, which inclines him to cruelty, was not the sole cause of his torments; but that men did not attend to consider whether the sufferings of such insignificant creatures could be lessened: that eels were not the only sufferers; that lobsters and other shell fish were put into cold water and boiled to death by slow degrees in many parts of the sea coast; that these, and many other such wanton atrocities, were the consequence of care-

lessness occasioned by the pride of mankind despising their low estate, and of the general opinion that there is no punishable sin in the ill-treatment of animals designed for our use; that, therefore, the woman did not bestow so much thought on him as to cut his head off first, and that she would have laughed at any considerate person who should have desired such a thing; with what fearful indignation might he inveigh against the unfeeling metaphysician that, like a cruel spirit alarmed at the appearance of a dawning of mercy upon animals, could not rest satisfied with opposing the Cruelty Prevention Bill by the plea of possible inconvenience to mankind, highly magnified and emblazoned, but had set forth to the vulgar and unthinking of all ranks, in the jargon of proud learning, that man's obligations of morality towards the creatures subjected to his use are imperfect obligations!"

Robinson's review was, I imagine, *The London Review*, founded by Richard Cumberland in February, 1809, which, however, no longer existed, having run its brief course by November, 1809.

"Megæra's snaky locks." From *Paradise Lost*, X., 559:—

> and up the trees
> Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
> That curl'd Megæra.

Here should come another letter from Lamb to Charles Lloyd, Senior, dated March 10, 1810, not available for this edition. It refers to Mr. Lloyd's translation of the first seven books of the *Odyssey* and is accompanied by a number of criticisms. Lamb advises Mr. Lloyd to complete the *Odyssey*, adding that he would prize it for its Homeric plainness and truths above the confederate jumble of Pope, Browne and Fenton which goes under Pope's name and is far inferior to his *Iliad*. Among the criticisms is one on Mr. Lloyd's use of the word "patriotic," in which Lamb says that it strikes his ears as being too modern; adding that in English few words of more than three syllables chime well into a verse. The word "sentiment" calls from him the remark that he would root it out of a translation of Homer. "It came in with Sterne, and was a child he had by Affectation."]

LETTER 181

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

[April 9th, 1810.]

DEAR Gutch,—I did not see your brother, who brought me Wither; but he understood, he said, you were daily expecting to come to town: this has prevented my writing. The books

have pleased me excessively: I should think you could not have made a better selection. I never saw "Philaretè" before—judge of my pleasure. I could not forbear scribbling certain critiques in pencil on the blank leaves. Shall I send them, or may I expect to see you in town? Some of them are remarks on the character of Wither and of his writings. Do you mean to have anything of that kind? What I have said on "Philaretè" is poor, but I think some of the rest not so bad: perhaps I have exceeded my commission in scrawling over the copies; but my delight therein must excuse me, and pencil-marks will rub out. Where is the Life? Write, for I am quite in the dark.

Yours, with many thanks, C. Lamb.

Perhaps I could digest the few critiques prefixed to the Satires, Shepherds Hunting, &c., into a short abstract of Wither's character and works, at the end of his Life. But, may be, you don't want any thing, and have said all you wish in the Life.

Note

[John Mathew Gutch (1776-1861), whom we have met before (see page 167), was at this time living at Bristol, where he owned, edited and printed *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*. He had been printing for his own pleasure an edition of George Wither's poems, which he had sent to Lamb for his opinion, intending ultimately to edit Wither fully. Lamb returned the volumes with a number of comments, many of which he afterwards incorporated in his essay "On the Poetry of George Wither," printed in his *Works* in 1818. Gutch subsequently handed the volumes to his friend Dr. John Nott of the Hot Wells, Bristol, who had views of his own upon Wither, and who commented in his turn on the poet and on Lamb's criticism of the poet. In course of time the volumes fell into Lamb's hands again, when Nott's comments on Wither and on Lamb received treatment. They were ultimately given by Lamb to his friend Brook Pulham of the India House (who made the caricature etching of "Ælia") and are now in the possession of Mr. A. C. Swinburne, who told the story of the book in the *Nineteenth Century* for January, 1885, reprinted in his *Miscellanies*, 1886. Some passages from that article will be found in the notes to Lamb's essay on Wither in Vol. I. of the present edition, page 453. The last word was with Nott, for when Gutch printed a three- or four-volume edition of Wither in 1820, under Nott's editorship, many of Lamb's best things were included as Nott's.]

LETTER 182

CHARLES LAMB TO BASIL MONTAGU

Mr. Hazlitt's: Winterslow, near Sarum,
12th July, 1810.

DEAR [Montagu],—I have turned and twisted the MSS. in my head, and can make nothing of them. I knew when I took them that I could not; but I do not like to do an act of ungracious necessity at once; so I am ever committing myself by half engagements and total failures. I cannot make any body understand why I can't do such things. It is a defect in my occiput. I cannot put other people's thoughts together; I forget every paragraph as fast as I read it; and my head has received such a shock by an all-night journey on the top of the coach, that I shall have enough to do to nurse it into its natural pace before I go home. I must devote myself to imbecility. I must be gloriously useless while I stay here. How is Mrs. [M.]? will she pardon my inefficiency? The city of Salisbury is full of weeping and wailing. The Bank has stopt payment; and every body in the town kept money at it, or has got some of its notes. Some have lost all they had in the world. It is the next thing to seeing a city with a plague within its walls. The Wilton people are all undone. All the manufacturers there kept cash at the Salisbury bank; and I do suppose it to be the unhappiest county in England this, where I am making holiday.

We purpose setting out for Oxford Tuesday fortnight, and coming thereby home. But no more night travelling. My head is sore (understand it of the inside) with that deduction of my natural rest which I suffered coming down. Neither Mary nor I can spare a morsel of our rest. It is incumbent on us to be misers of it. Travelling is not good for us—we travel so seldom. If the Sun be Hell, it is not for the fire, but for the sempiternal motion of that miserable Body of Light. How much more dignified leisure hath a mussel glued to his unpassable rocky limit, two inch square! He hears the tide roll over him, backwards and forwards twice a-day (as the d——d Salisbury Long Coach goes and returns in eight and forty hours), but knows better than to take an outside night-place a top on't. He is the Owl of the Sea. Minerva's fish. The fish of Wisdom.

Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. [M.].

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[If the date is correct we must suppose that the Lambs had made a second visit to the Hazlitts and were intending to return by way of Oxford (see next Letter).

Basil Montagu was a barrister and humanitarian, a friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and afterwards step-father-in-law of Procter. He was born in 1770 and lived until 1851. Lamb probably addressed to him many other letters, also to his third wife, Carlyle's "noble lady." But the correspondence was destroyed by Mrs. Procter.

The MSS. referred to cannot now be identified.]

LETTER 183

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

August 9th, 1810.

DEAR H.,—Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well (I was very ill on the journey) and continued so till Monday night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take any more journeys with two experiences against it. I find all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah—have just got her letter.

H. Robinson has been to Blenheim. He says you will be sorry to hear that we should have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it.

The pictures are all Titians, Jupiter and Ledas, Mars and Venuses, &c., all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show it to females. But he says they are very fine; and perhaps it is shown separately to put another fee into the shower's pocket. Well, I shall never see it.

I have lost all wish for sights. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you in London.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

Thursday.

NOTE

[Hazlitt subsequently saw the Blenheim Titians and wrote of them with gusto in his description of the Picture Galleries of England.

Next should come a letter from Lamb to Mrs. Thomas Clarkson, dated September 18, 1810, not available for this edition; relating to the illness of Mary Lamb and stating that she is "quite restored and will be with me in little more than a week."]

LETTER 184

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Friday, 19 Oct., 1810. *E. I. Ho.*

DR W.—I forwarded the Letter which you sent to me, without opening it, to your Sister at Binfield. She has returned it to me, and begs me to tell you that she intends returning from B. on Monday or Tuesday next, when Priscilla leaves it, and that it was her earnest wish to spend another week with us in London, but she awaits another Letter from home to determine her. I can only say that she appeared so much pleased with London, and that she is so little likely to see it again for a long time, that if you can spare her, it will be almost a pity not. But doubtless she will have heard again from you, before I can get a reply to this Letter & what she next hears she says will be decisive. If wanted, she will set out immediately from London. Mary has been very ill which you have heard I suppose from the Montagues. She is very weak and low spirited now. I was much pleased with your continuation of the Essay on Epitaphs. It is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject & it goes to the Bottom. In particular I was pleased with your Translation of that Turgid Epitaph into the plain feeling under it. It is perfectly a Test. But what is the reason we have so few good Epitaphs after all?

A very striking instance of your position might be found in the Church yard of Ditton upon Thames, if you know such a place. Ditton upon Thames has been blessed by the residence of a Poet, who for Love or Money, I do not well know which, has dignified every grave stone for the last few years with bran new verses, all different, and all ingenious, with the Author's name at the Bottom of each. The sweet Swan of Thames has artfully diversified his strains & his rhymes, that the same thought never occurs twice. More justly perhaps, as no thought ever occurs at all, there was a

physical impossibility that the same thought should recur. It is long since I saw and read these inscriptions, but I remember the impression was of a smug Usher at his desk, in the intervals of instruction levelling his pen. Of Death as it consists of dust and worms and mourners and uncertainty he had never thought, but the word death he had often seen separate & conjunct with other words, till he had learned to skill of all its attributes as glibly as Unitarian Belsham will discuss you the attributes of the word God, in a Pulpit, and will talk of infinity with a tongue that dangles from a scull that never reached in thought and thorough imagination two inches, or further than from his hand to his mouth, or from the vestry to the Sounding Board. [But the] epitaphs were trim and sprag & patent, & pleased the survivors of Thames Ditton above the old mumpsimus of Afflictions Sore.

To do justice though, it must be owned that even the excellent Feeling which dictated this Dirge when new, must have suffered something in passing thro' so many thousand applications, many of them no doubt quite misplaced, as I have seen in Islington Churchy'd (I think) an Epitaph to an Infant who died Ætatis 4 months, with this seasonable inscription appended, Honor thy Fath^r. and Moth^r. that thy days may be long in the Land &c.—Sincerely wishing your children better [*words cut out with signature*].

NOTE

[Binfield, near Windsor, was the home of Dorothy Wordsworth's uncle, Dr. Cookson, Canon of Windsor.

Priscilla, *née* Lloyd, a sister of Charles Lloyd, had married Christopher Wordsworth, afterwards Master of Trinity, in 1804.

Wordsworth's "Essay on Epitaphs" was printed in part in *The Friend*, February 22, 1810. For the remainder see Wordsworth's *Works*. Part II. began with a reference to *Rosamund Gray*. I quote the passage containing the turgid example.

Let us return to an instance of common life. I quote it with reluctance, not so much for its absurdity as that the expression in one place will strike at first sight as little less than impious; and it is indeed, though unintentionally so, most irreverent. But I know no other example that will so forcibly illustrate the important truth I wish to establish. The following epitaph is to be found in a church-yard in Westmoreland; which the present Writer has reason to think of with interest as it contains the remains of some of his ancestors and kindred. The date is 1673.

"Under this Stone, Reader, inter'd doth lye,
Beauty and Virtue's true epitomy.
At her appearance the noone-son
Blush'd and shrunk in 'cause quite outdon.
In her concentered did all graces dwell:
God pluck'd my rose that He might take a smel.
I'll say no more: but weeping wish I may
Soone with thy dear chaste ashes com to lay.
Sic effievit Maritus."

Can anything go beyond this in extravagance? yet, if the fundamental thoughts be translated into a natural style, they will be found reasonable and affecting —— "The woman who lies here interred, was in my eyes a perfect image of beauty and virtue; she was to me a brighter object than the sun in heaven: God took her, who was my delight, from this earth to bring her nearer to Himself. Nothing further is worthy to be said than that weeping I wish soon to lie by thy dear chaste ashes. Thus did the husband pour out his tears."

Wordsworth wrote an epitaph on Lamb, but it was too long to be used. A few lines are now on the tablet in Edmonton Church.

The text of "Afflictions Sore" will be found on page 63. Lamb had begun his criticisms of churchyard epitaphs very early: Talfourd tells that, when quite a little boy, after reading a number of flattering inscriptions, he asked Mary Lamb where all the bad people were buried.]

LETTER 185

MARY AND CHARLES LAMB TO MISS WORDSWORTH

[P.M. November 13, 1810.]

MY dear friend—My brother's letter, which I did not see, I am sure has distressed you sadly. I was then so ill as to alarm him exceedingly, and he thought me quite incapable of any kind of business. It is a great mortification to me to be such an useless creature, and I feel myself greatly indebted to you for the very kind manner in which you take this ungracious matter: but I will say no more on this unpleasant subject. I am at present under the care of Dr. Tuthill. I think I have derived great benefit from his medicines. He has also made a water drinker of me, which, contrary to my expectations, seems to agree with me very well.

I very much regret that you were so untimely snatched away; the lively recollection you seem to retain of London scenes will I hope induce you to return, in happier times, for I must still hope for better days.

We have had many pleasant hours with Coleridge,—if I had not known how ill he is I should have had no idea of it, for he has been very chearful. But yet I have no good news to send you of him, for two days ago, when I saw him last, he had not begun his course of medicine & regimen under Carlisle. I have had a very chearful letter from Mrs. Clarkson. She complained a little of your friend Tom, but she says she means to devote the winter to the task of new molding him, I am afraid she will find it no easy task.

Mrs. Montague was very sorry to find you gone. I have not seen much of her, for I have kept very much at home since her return. I mean to stay at home and keep early hours all this winter.

I have a new maid coming this evening. Betty, that you left here, went from me last week, and I took a girl lately from the country, who was fetched away in a few days by her sister, who took it into her head that the Temple was an improper place for a girl to live in. I wish the one that is coming may suit me. She is seven & twenty, with a very plain person, therefore I may hope she will be in little danger here.

Henry Robinson, and many other friends that you made here, enquire continually after you. The Spanish lady is gone, and now poor Robinson is left quite forlorn.

The streets remind me so much of you that I wish for you every showy shop I pass by. I hope we had many pleasant fireside hours together, but I almost fear the stupid dispirited state I was in made me seem a very flat companion; but I know I listened with great pleasure to many interesting conversations. I thank you for what you have done for Phillips, his fate will be decided in about a week. He has lately breakfasted with Sir Joseph Banks, who received him with great civility but made him no promise of support. Sir Joseph told him a new candidate had started up who it was expected would be favoured by the council. I am afraid Phillips stands a very poor chance.

I am doing nothing, I wish I was, for if I were once more busily employed at work, I should be more satisfied with myself. I should not feel so helpless, & so useless.

I hope you will write soon, your letters give me great pleasure; you have made me so well acquainted with all your household, that I must hope for frequent accounts how you are all going on. Remember us affectionately to your brother & sister. I hope the little Katherine continues mending. God bless you all & every one.

Your affectionate friend

Nov. 13, 1810. M. Lamb.

LETTER 185 (*continued*).

[*Charles Lamb adds*:—]

Mary has left a little space for me to fill up with nonsense, as the Geographers used to cram monsters in the voids of their maps & call it Terra Incognita. She has told you how she has taken to water, like a hungry otter. I too limp after her in lame imita-

tion, but it goes against me a little *at first*. I have been *aquavorous* now for full four days, and it seems a moon. I am full of cramps & rheumatisms, and cold internally so that fire won't warm me, yet I bear all for virtues sake. Must I then leave you, Gin, Rum, Brandy, Aqua Vitæ—pleasant jolly fellows—Damn Temperance and them that first invented it, some Anti Noahite. Coleridge has powdered his head, and looks like Bacchus, Bacchus ever sleek and young. He is going to turn sober, but his Clock has not struck yet, meantime he pours down goblet after goblet, the 2d to see where the 1st is gone, the 3d to see no harm happens to the second, a fourth to say there's another coming, and a 5th to say he's not sure he's the last. William Henshaw is dead. He died yesterday, aged 56. It was but a twelvemonth or so back that his Father, an ancient Gunsmith & my Godfather, sounded me as to my willingness to be guardian to this William in case of his (the old man's) death. William had three times broke in business, twice in England, once in t'other Hemisphere. He returned from America a sot & hath liquidated all debts. What a hopeful ward I am rid of. Ætatis 56. I must have taken care of his morals, seen that he did not form imprudent connections, given my consent before he could have married &c. From all which the stroke of death hath relieved me. Mrs. Reynolds is the name of the Lady to whom I will remember you tomorrow. Farewell. Wish me strength to continue. I've been eating jugg'd Hare. The toast & water makes me quite sick. C. Lamb.

Note

[After the preceding letter Mary Lamb had been taken ill—but not, I think, mentally—and Dorothy Wordsworth's visit was put off.

Coleridge, *The Friend* having ceased, had come to London with the Montagus on October 26 to stay with them indefinitely at 55 Frith Street, Soho. But a few days after his arrival Montagu had inadvisedly repeated what he unjustifiably called a warning phrase of Wordsworth's concerning Coleridge's difficult habits as a guest—the word "nuisance" being mentioned—and this had so plunged Coleridge in grief that he left Soho for Hammersmith, where his friends the Morgans were living. Montagu's indiscretion led to a quarrel between Coleridge and Wordsworth which was long of healing. This is no place in which to tell the story, which has small part in Lamb's life; but it led to one of the few letters from Coleridge to Lamb that have been preserved (see Mr. E. H. Coleridge's edition of Coleridge's *Letters*, page 586).

Carlisle was Sir Anthony Carlisle (1768-1840), the surgeon and a friend of Lamb.

"The Spanish lady"—Madam Lavaggi. See Robinson's *Diary*, 1869, Vol. I., page 303.

"Phillips." This would be Ned Phillips, I presume, not the Colonel. I have not discovered for what post he was trying.

"The little Katherine." Catherine Wordsworth, born September 6, 1808, lived only until June 4, 1812.

"I have been *aquavorous*." Writing to Dorothy Wordsworth on December 23 Crabb Robinson says that Lamb has abstained from alcohol and tobacco since Lord Mayor's Day (November 9).

"Bacchus ever sleek and young." After Dryden, "Alexander's Feast," III., 2:—

Bacchus ever fair and ever young.

"William Henshaw." I know nothing more of this unfortunate man.]

LETTER 186

MARY AND CHARLES LAMB TO MISS WORDSWORTH

[P.M. Nov. 23, 1810.]

MY dear Friend, Miss Monkhouse left town yesterday, but I think I am able to answer all your enquiries. I saw her on Sunday evening at Mrs. Montagu's. She looked very well & said her health was greatly improved. She promised to call on me before she left town but the weather having been very bad I suppose has prevented her. She received the letter which came through my brother's hands and I have learned from Mrs. Montagu that all your commissions are executed. It was Carlisle that she consulted, and she is to continue taking his prescriptions in the country. Mr. Monkhouse & Mr. Addison drank tea with us one evening last week. Miss Monkhouse is a very pleasing girl, she reminds me, a little, of Miss Hutchinson. I have not seen Henry Robinson for some days past, but I remember he told me he had received a letter from you, and he talked of Spanish papers which he should send to Mr. Southey. I wonder he does not write, for I have always understood him to be a very regular correspondent, and he seemed very proud of your letter. I am tolerably well, but I still affect the invalid—take medicines, and keep at home as much as I possibly can. Water-drinking, though I confess it to be a flat thing, is become very easy to me. Charles perseveres in it most manfully.

Coleridge is just in the same state as when I wrote last—I have not seen him since Sunday, he was then at Mr. Morgan's but talked of taking a lodging.

Phillips feels a certainty that he shall lose his election, for the new candidate is himself a Fellow of the Royal Society, and [it] is thought Sir Joseph Banks will favour him. It will now be soon decided.

My new maid is now sick in bed. Am I not unlucky? She would have suited me very well if she had been healthy, but I must send her away if she is not better tomorrow.

Charles promised to add a few lines, I will therefore leave him plenty of room, for he may perhaps think of something to entertain you. I am sure I cannot.

I hope you will not return to Grasmere till all fear of the Scarlet Fever is over, I rejoice to hear so good an account of the children and hope you will write often. When I write next I will endeavour to get a frank. This I cannot do but when the parliament is sitting, and as you seemed anxious about Miss Monkhouse I would not defer sending this, though otherwise it is not worth paying one penny for.

God bless you all.

Yours affectionately
M. Lamb.

LETTER 186 (*continued*).

[*Charles Lamb adds*:—]

We are in a pickle. Mary from her affectation of physiognomy has hired a stupid big country wench who looked honest, as she thought, and has been doing her work some days but without eating—eats no butter nor meat, but prefers cheese with her tea for breakfast—and now it comes out that she was ill when she came with lifting her mother about (who is now with God) when she was dying, and with riding up from Norfolk 4 days and nights in the waggon. She got advice yesterday and took something which has made her bring up a quart of blood, and she now lies, a dead weight upon our humanity, in her bed, incapable of getting up, refusing to go into an hospital, having no body in town but a poor asthmatic dying Uncle, whose son lately married a drab who fills his house, and there is no where she can go, and she seems to have made up her mind to take her flight to heaven from our bed.—O God! O God!—for the little wheelbarrow which trundled the Hunchback from door to door to try the various charities of different professions of Mankind!

Here's her Uncle just crawled up, he is far liker Death than He. O the Parish, the Parish, the hospital, the infirmary, the charnel house, these are places meet for such guests, not our quiet mansion

where nothing but affluent plenty and literary ease should abound. —Howard's House, Howard's House, or where the Parylitic descended thro' the sky-light (what a God's Gift) to get at our Savior. In this perplexity such topics as Spanish papers and Monkhouses sink into comparative insignificance. What shall we do?— If she died, it were something: gladly would I pay the coffin maker and the bellman and searchers—O Christ. C. L.

NOTE

[Miss Monkhouse was the daughter of the Wordsworths' and Lambs' friend, Thomas Monkhouse.

"Mr. Addison." I have not traced this gentleman.

Miss Hutchinson was Sarah Hutchinson, sister of Mrs. Wordsworth.

"The Hunchback." In the *Arabian Nights*.

"Howard's House." This would be Cold-Bath Fields Prison, erected in 1794 upon some humane suggestions of Howard the Philanthropist.

"The Paralytic." See Mark ii.]

LETTERS 187 AND 188

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

Wednesday, November 28, 1810.

DEAR Hazlitt—I sent you on Saturday a Cobbett, containing your reply to the *Edinburgh Review*, which I thought you would be glad to receive as an example of attention on the part of Mr. Cobbett to insert it so speedily. Did you get it? We have received your pig, and return you thanks; it will be dressed in due form, with appropriate sauce, this day. Mary has been very ill indeed since you saw her; that is, as ill as she can be to remain at home. But she is a good deal better now, owing to a very careful regimen. She drinks nothing but water, and never goes out; she does not even go to the Captain's. Her indisposition has been ever since that night you left town; the night Miss W[ordsworth] came. Her coming, and that d——d Mrs. Godwin coming and staying so late that night, so overset her that she lay broad awake all that night, and it was by a miracle that she escaped a very bad illness, which I thoroughly expected. I have made up my mind that she shall never have any one in the house again with her, and that no one shall sleep with her, not even for a night; for it is a very serious

thing to be always living with a kind of fever upon her; and therefore I am sure you will take it in good part if I say that if Mrs. Hazlitt comes to town at any time, however glad we shall be to see her in the daytime, I cannot ask her to spend a night under our roof. Some decision we must come to, for the harassing fever that we have both been in, owing to Miss Wordsworth's coming, is not to be borne; and I would rather be dead than so alive. However, at present, owing to a regimen and medicines which Tuthill has given her, who very kindly volunteer'd the care of her, she is a great deal quieter, though too much harassed by company, who cannot or will not see how late hours and society teaze her.

Poor Phillips had the cup dash'd out of his lips as it were. He had every prospect of the situation, when about ten days since one of the council of the R. Society started for the place himself, being a rich merchant who lately failed, and he will certainly be elected on Friday next. P. is very sore and miserable about it.

Coleridge is in town, or at least at Hammersmith. He is writing or going to write in the *Courier* against Cobbett, and in favour of paper money.

No news. Remember me kindly to Sarah. I write from the office.

Yours ever, C. Lamb.

I just open'd it to say the pig, upon proof, hath turned out as good as I predicted. My fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odour. I find you have received the Cobbett. I think your paper complete.

Mrs. Reynolds, who is a sage woman, approves of the pig.

Note

["A Cobbett." This was Cobbett's *Political Register* for November 24, 1810, containing Hazlitt's letter upon "Mr. Malthus and the Edinburgh Reviewers," signed "The Author of a Reply to the *Essay on Population*." Hazlitt's reply had been criticised in the *Edinburgh* for August, probably only just published.

The postscript contains Lamb's first passage in praise of roast pig.

I place here the following undated letter to Godwin from Mr. Kegan Paul's *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries*, as it seems to be connected with the decision concerning visitors expressed in the letter to Hazlitt:—]

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR Godwin,—I have found it for several reasons indispensable to my comfort, and to my sister's, to have no visitors in the forenoon. If I cannot accomplish this I am determined to leave town.

I am extremely sorry to do anything in the slightest degree that may seem offensive to you or to Mrs. Godwin, but when a general rule is fixed on, you know how odious in a case of this sort it is to make exceptions; I assure you I have given up more than one friendship in stickling for this point. It would be unfair to those from whom I have parted with regret to make exceptions, which I would not do for them. Let me request you not to be offended, and to request Mrs. G. not to be offended, if I beg both your compliances with this wish. Your friendship is as dear to me as that of any person on earth, and if it were not for the necessity of keeping tranquillity at home, I would not seem so unreasonable.

If you were to see the agitation that my sister is in, between the fear of offending you and Mrs. G. and the difficulty of maintaining a system which she feels we must do to live without wretchedness, you would excuse this seeming strange request, which I send you with a trembling anxiety as to its reception with you, whom I would never offend. I rely on your goodness.

C. Lamb.

LETTER 189

MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

[? End of 1810 or early 1811.]

My dear Sarah,—I have taken a large sheet of paper, as if I were going to write a long letter; but that is by no means my intention, for I only have time to write three lines to notify what I ought to have done the moment I received your welcome letter. Namely, that I shall be very much joyed to see you. Every morning lately I have been expecting to see you drop in, even before your letter came; and I have been setting my wits to work to think how to make you as comfortable as the nature of our inhospitable habits will admit. I must work while you are here; and I have been slaving very hard to get through with something before you come, that I may be quite in the way of it, and not teize you with complaints all day that I do not know what to do.

I am very sorry to hear of your mischance. Mrs. Rickman has just buried her youngest child. I am glad I am an old maid; for, you see, there is nothing but misfortunes in the marriage state.

Charles was drunk last night, and drunk the night before; which night before was at Godwin's, where we went, at a short summons from Mr. G., to play a solitary rubber, which was interrupted by

the entrance of Mr. and little Mrs. Liston; and after them came Henry Robinson, who is now domesticated at Mr. Godwin's fireside, and likely to become a formidable rival to Tommy Turner. We finished there at twelve o'clock (Charles and Liston brim-full of gin and water and snuff): after which Henry Robinson spent a long evening by our fireside at home; and there was much gin and water drunk, albeit only one of the party partook of it. And H. R. professed himself highly indebted to Charles for the useful information he gave him on sundry matters of taste and imagination, even after Charles could not speak plain for tipsiness. But still he swallowed the flattery and the spirits as savourily as Robinson did his cold water.

Last night was to be a night, but it was not. There was a certain son of one of Martin's employers, one young Mr. Blake; to do whom honour, Mrs. Burney brought forth, first rum, then a single bottle of champaine, long kept in her secret hoard; then two bottles of her best currant wine, which she keeps for Mrs. Rickman, came out; and Charles partook liberally of all these beverages, while Mr. Young Blake and Mr. Ireton talked of high matters, such as the merits of the Whip Club, and the merits of red and white champaine. Do I spell that last word right? Rickman was not there, so Ireton had it all his own way.

The alternating Wednesdays will chop off one day in the week from your jolly days, and I do not know how we shall make it up to you; but I will contrive the best I can. Phillips comes again pretty regularly, to the great joy of Mrs. Reynolds. Once more she hears the well-loved sounds of, 'How do you do, Mrs. Reynolds? How does Miss Chambers do?'

I have spun out my three lines amazingly. Now for family news. Your brother's little twins are not dead, but Mrs. John Hazlitt and her baby may be, for any thing I know to the contrary, for I have not been there for a prodigious long time. Mrs. Holcroft still goes about from Nicholson to Tuthil, and from Tuthil to Godwin, and from Godwin to Tuthil, and from Tuthil to Godwin, and from Godwin to Tuthil, and from Tuthil to Nicholson, to consult on the publication, or no publication, of the life of the good man, her husband. It is called the Life Everlasting. How does that same Life go on in your parts? Good bye, God bless you. I shall be glad to see you when you come this way.

Yours most affectionately,

M. Lamb.

I am going in great haste to see Mrs. Clarkson, for I must get back to dinner, which I have hardly time to do. I wish that dear, good, amiable woman would go out of town. I thought she was

clean gone; and yesterday there was a consultation of physicians held at her house, to see if they could keep her among them here a few weeks longer.

NOTE

[This letter is dated by Mr. Hazlitt November 30, 1810, but I doubt if that can be right. See extract from Crabb Robinson in the note to Letter 185, on page 422, testifying to Lamb's sobriety between November 9 and December 23.

Liston was John Liston (1776?-1846), the actor, whose mock biography Lamb wrote some years later (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 248). His wife was a diminutive comedienne, famous as Queen Dollalolla in "Tom Thumb." Lamb may have known Liston through the Burneys, for he is said to have been an usher in Dr. Burney's school—Dr. Charles Burney, Captain Burney's brother.

"Henry Robinson." Crabb Robinson's *Diary* shows us that his domestication by Godwin's fireside was not of long duration. I do not know who Tommy Turner was. Mr. Ireton was probably William Ayrton, the musical critic, a friend and neighbour of the Burneys, and later a friend of the Lambs, as we shall see.

"The alternating Wednesdays." The Lambs seem to have given up their weekly Wednesday evening, which now became fortnightly. Later it was changed to Thursday and made monthly.

Mrs. Reynolds had been a Miss Chambers.]

LETTER 190

MARY LAMB TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date. ? 1811.]

MY dear Matilda,—Coleridge has given me a very chearful promise that he will wait on Lady Jerningham any day you will be pleased to appoint; he offered to write to you; but I found it was to be done *tomorrow*, and as I am pretty well acquainted with his tomorrows, I thought good to let you know his determination *today*. He is in town today, but as he is often going to Hammersmith for a night or two, you had better perhaps send the invitation through me, and I will manage it for you as well as I can. You had better let him have four or five days' previous notice, and you had better send the invitation as soon as you can; for he seems tolerably well just now. I mention all these betters, because I wish to do the best I can for you, perceiving, as I do, it is a thing

you have set your heart upon. He dined one [d]ay in company with Catilana (is that the way you spell her Italian name?—I am reading Sallust, and had like to have written Catiline). How I should have liked, and how you would have liked, to have seen Coleridge and Catilana together!

You have been very good of late to let me come and see you so seldom, and you are a little goodish to come so seldom here, because you stay away from a kind motive. But if you stay away always, as I fear you mean to do, I would not give one pin for your good intentions. In plain words, come and see me very soon; for though I be not sensitive as some people, I begin to feel strange qualms for having driven you from me.

Yours affectionately,
M. LAMB.

Wednesday.

Alas! Wednesday shines no more to me now.

Miss Duncan played famously in the new comedy, which went off as famously. By the way, she put in a spiteful piece of wit, I verily believe of her own head; and methought she stared me full in the face. The words were "As silent as an author in company." Her hair and herself looked remarkably well.

NOTE

[I place this undated letter here on account of that which follows. Angelica Catalani (1782-1849) was the great singer. I find no record of Coleridge's meeting with her.

"Miss Duncan." Praise of this lady in Miss Hardcastle and other parts will be found in Leigh Hunt's *Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres*, 1807. At this time she was playing with the Drury Lane Company at the Lyceum. They produced several new plays.]

LETTER 191

(Fragment)

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN MORGAN

[Dated at end: March 8, 1811.]

THERE—don't read any further, because the Letter is not intended for you but for Coleridge, who might perhaps not have opened it directed to him suo nomine. It is to invite C. to

Lady Jerningham's on Sunday. Her address is to be found within. We come to Hammersmith notwithstanding on Sunday, and hope Mrs. M. will not think of getting us Green Peas or any such expensive luxuries. A plate of plain Turtle, another of Turbot, with good roast Beef in the rear, and, as Alderman Curtis says, whoever can't make a dinner of that ought to be damn'd. C. LAMB.

Friday night, 8 Mar., 1811.

NOTE

[This is Lamb's only existing letter to Coleridge's friend, John Morgan.

Coleridge had not found a lodging and was still with the Morgans at 7 Portland Place, Hammersmith.

Alderman Sir William Curtis, M.P., afterwards Lord Mayor of London, was the subject of much ridicule by the Whigs and Radicals, and the hero of Peter Pindar's satire "The Fat Knight and the Petition." It was he who first gave the toast of the three R.'s —"reading, riting and rithmetic" (see Letter 328).]

LETTER 192

MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

2 Oct., 1811.
Temple.

MY dear Sarah,—I have been a long time anxiously expecting the happy news that I have just received. I address you because, as the letter has been lying some days at the India House, I hope you are able to sit up and read my congratulations on the little live boy you have been so many years wishing for. As we old women say, 'May he live to be a great comfort to you!' I never knew an event of the kind that gave me so much pleasure as the little long-looked-for-come-at-last's arrival; and I rejoiced to hear his honour has begun to suck—the word was not distinctly written and I was a long time making out the solemn fact. I hope to hear from you soon, for I am desirous to know if your nursing labours are attended with any difficulties. I wish you a happy *getting-up*, and a merry christening.

Charles sends his love, perhaps though he will write a scrap to Hazlitt at the end. He is now looking over me, he is always in my way, for he has had a month's holydays at home, but I am happy to say they end on Monday—when mine begin, for I am going to pass a week at Richmond with Mrs. Burney. She has been dying, but she went to the Isle of Wight and recovered once more, and she is

finishing her recovery at Richmond. When there I intend to read Novels and play at Piquet all day long.

Yours truly,

M. LAMB.

LETTER 192 (*continued*)

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

DEAR Hazlitt,

I cannot help accompanying my sister's congratulations to Sarah with some of my own to you on this happy occasion of a man child being born—

Delighted Fancy already sees him some future rich alderman or opulent merchant; painting perhaps a little in his leisure hours for amusement like the late H. Bunbury, Esq.

Pray, are the Winterslow Estates entailed? I am afraid lest the young dog when he grows up should cut down the woods, and leave no groves for widows to take their lonesome solace in. The Wem Estate of course can only devolve on him, in case of your brother leaving no male issue.

Well, my blessing and heaven's be upon him, and make him like his father, with something a better temper and a smoother head of hair, and then all the men and women must love him.

Martin and the Card-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within Caudle-shot. C. LAMB.

If the widow be assistant on this notable occasion, give our due respects and kind remembrances to her.

NOTE

[William Hazlitt's son, William Hazlitt, afterwards the Registrar, was born on September 26, 1811. He had been preceded by another boy, in 1809, who lived, however, only a few months.

"H. Bunbury." Henry William Bunbury, the caricaturist and painter, and the husband of Goldsmith's friend, Catherine Horneck, the "Jessamy Bride." He died in 1811.

The Card-boys would be Lamb's Wednesday visitors.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Charles Lloyd, Senior, dated September 8, 1812, not available for this edition. It is printed in *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds:* a letter of criticism of Mr. Lloyd's translation of the *Epistles* of Horace.

A letter from Lamb to Charles Lloyd, Junior, belonging to this period, is now no more, in common with all but two of his letters, the remainder of which were destroyed by Lloyd's son, Charles Grosvenor Lloyd. Writing to Daniel Stuart on October 13, 1812, Wordsworth says, "Lamb writes to Lloyd that C.'s play [Coleridge's "Remorse"] is accepted."

We now come to a period of three years in Lamb's life which is represented in the correspondence by only two or three letters. Not until Letter 196, August 9, 1814, does he return to his old manner. During this time Lamb is known to have written his first essay on Christ's Hospital, his "Confessions of a Drunkard," the little but excellent series of Table-Talk in *The Examiner* and some verses in the same paper. Possibly he wrote many letters too, but they have disappeared. We know from Crabb Robinson's *Diary* that it was a social period with the Lambs; the India House work also becoming more exacting than before.]

LETTERS 193 AND 194

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN DYER COLLIER

[No date. Probably 1812.]

DEAR Sir—Mrs. Collier has been kind enough to say that you would endeavour to procure a reporter's situation for W. Hazlitt. I went to consult him upon it last night, and he acceded very eagerly to the proposal, and requests me to say how very much obliged he feels to your kindness, and how glad he should be for its success. He is, indeed, at his wits' end for a livelihood; and, I should think, especially qualified for such an employment, from his singular facility in retaining all conversations at which he has been ever present. I think you may recommend him with confidence. I am sure I shall *myself* be obliged to you for your exertions, having a great regard for him.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Sunday morning.

NOTE

[John Payne Collier, who prints this in his *Old Man's Diary*, adds: "The result was that my father procured for Hazlitt the situation of a parliamentary reporter on the *Morning Chronicle;* but he did not retain it long, and as his talents were undoubted, Mr. Perry transferred to him the office of theatrical critic, a position

which was subsequently held for several years by a person of much inferior talents."

Crabb Robinson mentions in his *Diary* under the date December 24, 1812, that Hazlitt is in high spirits from his engagement with Perry as parliamentary reporter at four guineas a week.

I place here, not having any definite date, a letter on a kindred subject from Mary Lamb:—]

MARY LAMB TO MRS. JOHN DYER COLLIER

[No date.]

DEAR Mrs. C.—This note will be given to you by a young friend of mine, whom I wish you would employ: she has commenced business as a mantua-maker, and, if you and my girls would try her, I think she could fit you all three, and it will be doing her an essential service. She is, I think, very deserving, and if you procure work for her among your friends and acquaintances, so much the better. My best love to you and my girls. We are both well.

Yours affectionately,
MARY LAMB.

NOTE

[John Payne Collier remarks: "Southey and Coleridge, as is well known, married two sisters of the name of Fricker. I never saw either of them, but a third sister settled as a mantua-maker in London, and for some years she worked for my mother and her daughters. She was an intelligent woman, but by no means above her business, though she was fond of talking of her two poet-married relations. She was introduced to my mother by the following note from Mary Lamb, who always spoke of my sisters as *her* girls."

Mary Lamb had herself worked as a mantua-maker for some years previous to the autumn of 1796.]

LETTER 195

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN SCOTT

[P.M. (? Feb.), 1814.]

SIR—Your explanation is perfectly pleasant to me, and I accede to your proposal most willingly.

As I began with the beginning of this month, I will if you please

call upon you for *your part of the engagement* (supposing I shall have performed mine) on the 1st of March next, and thence forward if it suit you quarterly.—You will occasionally wink at BRISKETS & VEINY PIECES.

Your hble. Svt.

C. LAMB.

Saturday.

NOTE

[John Scott (1783-1821) we shall meet later, in 1820, in connection with the *London Magazine*, which he edited until the fatal termination of his quarrel with *Blackwood's*. Scott had just become editor of *The Champion*.

Lamb's only contribution to *The Champion* under Scott, which can be identified, is the essay "On the Melancholy of Tailors," but there is little doubt that he supplied many of the extracts from old authors which were printed from time to time, and possibly one or two comic letters also.

See Letter 201 on page 449.]

LETTER 196

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: August 9, 1814.]

DEAR Wordsworth, I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receit of the great Armful of Poetry which you have sent me, and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplishd that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M. Burney came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read. A day in heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Church yard. The only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time and not duly taken away again—the deaf man and the blind man—the Jacobite and the Hanoverian whom antipathies reconcile—the Scarron-entry of the rusticating parson upon his solitude—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her re-

appearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this Best of Books upon the best subjects for partial naming.

That gorgeous Sunset is famous, I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury plain five years ago, that drew Phillips from the card table where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequall'd set, but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified such as the prophets saw them, in that sunset—the wheel—the potter's clay—the wash pot—the wine press—the almond tree rod—the baskets of figs—the fourfold visaged head, the throne and him that sat thereon.

One feeling I was particularly struck with as what I recognised so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure,—the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming, properties of a country church just entered—a certain fragrance which it has—either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country—exactly what you have reduced into words but I am feeling I cannot. The reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument, in Harrow Church, (do you know it?) with its fine long Spire white as washd marble, to be seen by vantage of its high scite as far as Salisbury spire itself almost—

I shall select a day or two very shortly when I am coolest in brain to have a steady second reading, which I feel will lead to many more, for it will be a stock book with me while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me.

There is a deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or South country man entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it that by your system it was doubtful whether a Liver in Towns had a Soul to be Saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.

Save for a late excursion to Harrow and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this Summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent all that was countryfy'd in the Parks is all but obliterated. The very colour of green is vanishd, the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (Arabia Arenosa), not a vestige or hint of grass ever having grown there, booths and drinking places go all round it for a mile and half I am confident—I might say two miles in circuit—the stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air and we are stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park.

Order after Order has been issued by Ld. Sidmouth in the name of the Regent (acting in behalf of his Royal father) for the dispersion of the varlets, but in vain. The vis unita of all the

Publicans in London, Westm^r., Marybone, and miles round is too powerful a force to put down. The Regent has rais'd a phantom which he cannot lay. There they'll stay probably for ever. The whole beauty of the Place is gone—that lake-look of the Serpentine —it has got foolish ships upon it—but something whispers to have confidence in nature and its revival—

> at the coming of the *milder day*
> These monuments shall all be overgrown.

Meantime I confess to have smoked one delicious Pipe in one of the cleanliest and goodliest of the booths—a tent rather, " O call it not a booth ! "—erected by the public Spirit of Watson, who keeps the Adam and Eve at Pancras (the ale houses have all emigrated with their train of bottles, mugs, corkscrews, waiters, into Hyde Park—whole Ale houses with all their Ale !) in company with some of the guards that had been in France and a fine French girl (habited like a Princess of Banditti) which one of the dogs had transported from the Garonne to the Serpentine. The unusual scene, in H. Park, by Candlelight in open air, good tobacco, bottled stout, made it look like an interval in a campaign, a repose after battle, I almost fancied scars smarting and was ready to club a story with my comrades of some of my lying deeds.

After all, the fireworks were splendent—the Rockets in clusters, in trees and all shapes, spreading about like young stars in the making, floundering about in Space (like unbroke horses) till some of Newton's calculations should fix them, but then they went out. Any one who could see 'em and the still finer showers of gloomy rain fire that fell sulkily and angrily from 'em, and could go to bed without dreaming of the Last Day, must be as hardened an Atheist as * * * * * *.

Again let me thank you for your present and assure you that fireworks and triumphs have not distracted me from receiving a calm and noble enjoyment from it (which I trust I shall often), and I sincerely congratulate you on its appearance.

With kindest remembrances to you & household, we remain— yours sincerely

C. Lamb and sister.

9 Aug., 1814.

Note

[With this letter Lamb's second epistolary period may be said to begin.

Wordsworth had sent Lamb a copy of *The Excursion*, which had been published in July, 1814. In connection with this letter Lamb's review of the poem in the *Quarterly* (see Vol. I. of this

edition, page 160) should be read. The tales of the churchyard are in Books VI. and VII. The story of Margaret had been written in 1795.

The "sunset scene" (see Letter 199, page 444) is at the end of Book II. Lamb refers to his visit to Hazlitt at Winterslow, near Salisbury, in 1809, with Mary Lamb, Colonel Phillips and Martin Burney. Wordsworth was not with them. This is the passage:—

So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.

In August, 1814, London was in a state of jubilation over the declaration of peace between England and France. Lord Sidmouth, late Mr. Addington, the Home Secretary, known as "The Doctor," was one of Lamb's butts in his political epigrams.

"At the coming of the *milder day*." A quotation from Wordsworth's "Hart-Leap Well."
"O call it not a booth!" I have not traced this.
"* * * * * * *." I assume these stars to stand for Godwin.]

LETTER 197

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

13 August, 1814.

DEAR Resuscitate,—there comes to you by the vehicle from Lad Lane this day a volume of German; what it is I cannot justly say, the characters of those northern nations having been always singularly harsh and unpleasant to me. It is a contribution of Dr. Southey towards your wants, and you would have had it sooner but for an odd accident. I wrote for it three days ago, and the Dr., as he thought, sent it me. A book of like exterior he did send, but being disclosed, how far unlike. It was the *Well-bred Scholar*,—a book with which it seems the Dr. laudably fills up those hours which he can steal from his medical avocations. Chesterfield, Blair, Beattie, portions from "The Life of Savage," make up a prettyish system of morality and the Belles Lettres, which Mr. Mylne, a Schoolmaster, has properly brought together, and calls the collection by the denomination above mentioned. The Doctor had no sooner discovered his error than he despatched man and horse to rectify the mistake, and with a pretty kind of ingenuous modesty in his note seemeth to deny any knowledge of the *Well-bred Scholar;* false modesty surely and a blush misplaced; for, what more pleasing than the consideration of professional austerity thus relaxing, thus improving; but so, when a child I remember blushing, being caught on my knees to my maker, or doing otherwise some pious and praiseworthy action; *now* I rather love such things to be seen. Henry Crabb Robinson is out upon his circuit, and his books are inaccessible without his leave and key. He is attending the Midland Circuit,—a short term, but to him, as to many young Lawyers, a long vacation sufficiently dreary. I thought I could do no better than transmit to him, not extracts, but your very letter itself, than which I think I never read any thing more moving, more pathetic, or more conducive to the purpose of persuasion. The Crab is a sour Crab if it does not sweeten him. I think it would draw another third volume of Dodsley out of me; but you say you don't want any English books?

Perhaps, after all, that's as well; one's romantic credulity is for ever misleading one into misplaced acts of foolery. Crab might have answered by this time: his juices take a long time supplying, but they'll run at last,—I know they will,—pure golden pippin. His address is at T. Robinson's, Bury, and if on Circuit, to be forwarded immediately—such my peremptory superscription. A fearful rumour has since reached me that the Crab is on the eve of setting out for France. If he is in England, your letter will reach him, and I flatter myself a touch of the persuasive of my own, which accompanies it, will not be thrown away; if it be, he is a Sloe, and no true-hearted crab, and there's an end. For that life of the German Conjuror which you speak of, "Colerus de Vitâ Doctoris vix-Intelligibilis," I perfectly remember the last evening we spent with Mrs. Morgan and Miss Brent, in London-Street,—(by that token we had raw rabbits for supper, and Miss Brent prevailed upon me to take a glass of brandy and water after supper, which is not my habit,)—I perfectly remember reading portions of that life in their parlour, and I think it must be among their Packages. It was the very last evening we were at that house. What is gone of that frank-hearted circle, Morgan and his coslettuces? He ate walnuts better than any man I ever knew. Friendships in these parts stagnate.[1] I am going to eat Turbot, Turtle, Venison, marrow pudding—cold punch, claret, madeira,—at our annual feast at half-past four this day.[2] They keep bothering me, (I'm at office,) and my ideas are confused. Let me know if I can be of any service as to books. God forbid the Architectonicon should be sacrificed to a foolish scruple of some Bookproprietor, as if books did not belong with the highest propriety to those that understand 'em best.

C. Lamb.

Note

[Since Lamb's last letter to him (October 30, 1809) Coleridge had done very little. *The Friend* had been given up; he had made his London home with the Morgans; had delivered the lectures on Shakespeare and contributed to *The Courier;* "Remorse" had been produced with Lamb's prologue, January 23, 1813; the quarrel with Wordsworth had been to some extent healed; he had sold his German books; and the opium-habit was growing on him. He was now at Bristol, living with Joseph Wade, and meditating a great work on Christianity which Cottle was to print, and which ultimately became the *Biographia Literaria.*

The term "Resuscitate" may refer to one of Coleridge's frequent threats of dying (see Letter 257, page 551).

[1] [See Appendix II., page 972.] [2] [*Ibid.*, page 972.]

Dr. Henry Herbert Southey (1788-1865) was brother of the poet. He had just settled in London.

"Mylne" was William Milns, author of the *Well-Bred Scholar*, 1794.

Crabb Robinson does not mention Coleridge's letter, nor make any reference to it, in his *Diary*. He went to France in August after circuit. It was at this time (August 23) that Coleridge wrote to John Murray concerning a translation of Goethe's *Faust*, which Murray contemplated (see *Letters*, E. H. Coleridge, page 624). The suggestion that Coleridge should translate *Faust* for Murray came *viâ* Crabb Robinson *viâ* Lamb.

The "life of the German conjuror." There were several Colerus'. John Colerus of Amsterdam wrote a Life of Spinoza. Lamb may have meant this. John Colerus of Berlin invented a perpetual calendar and John Jacob Colerus examined Platonic doctrine. There are still others.

The Morgans had moved to Ashley, near Box. Miss Brent was Mrs. Morgan's sister.

"Friendships in these parts stagnate." Here comes, in Mr. Macdonald's transcript, a long and very interesting passage concerning Lamb's card-playing friend Phillips, who has been appointed by Rickman, the new Clerk Assistant, to the House of Commons, to a secretaryship. Lamb suggests that in the past he has been guilty of writing Phillips love poems for him. My text has also another unavoidable omission.

"Our annual feast"—the annual dinner of the India House clerks.

"The Architectonicon." Lamb refers possibly to some great projected work of Coleridge's. The term is applied to metaphysicians. Possibly Goethe is referred to.]

LETTER 198

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

26th August, 1814.

LET the hungry soul rejoice: there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps inquired carelessly, or did not inquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of "Remorse" on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption; judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Inquire in seven years' time for the "Rokebys" and the "Laras," and where shall they be found?—fluttering fragmentally in

some thread-paper—whereas thy "Wallenstein" and thy "Remorse" are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian; there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast—perhaps for ages—tall copies—and people shan't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect till the great-great-grand-niece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel (which was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bedchamber.

Thy caterer Price was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee, like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

Mr. Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs. Jameson and Aders, No. 7, Laurence-Pountney-Lane, London, according to the information which Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist Alemagne, like thine, dear mystic.

I have been reading Madame Stael on Germany. An impudent clever woman. But if "Faust" be no better than in her abstract of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies! But I will not forget to look for Proclus. It is a kind of book which when one meets with it one shuts the lid faster than one opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that somewhere, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that or Plotinus, 205-270 A.D., Neoplatonist, or Saint Augustine's "City of God." So little do some folks value, what to others, *sc.* to you, "well used," had been the "Pledge of Immortality." Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such "a Hare" as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication; and may his friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press; lastly, may he be hunted by Reviewers, and the devil jug him! So I think I have answered all the questions except about Morgan's cos-lettuces. The first personal peculiarity I ever observed of him (all worthy souls are subject to 'em) was a particular kind of rabbit-like delight in munching salads with oil without vinegar after dinner—a steady contemplative browsing on them—didst never take note of it? Canst think of

any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? Do you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last. Trollope has got his living, worth £1000 a-year net. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic-sluggard, what mightest thou not have arrived at! Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity.

CHARLES LAMB.

NOTE

[Coleridge's play "Remorse" had been published by Pople in 1813. A copy of the first edition now brings about thirty shillings; but this is largely owing to the presence in the volume of Lamb's prologue. But *Rokeby* and *Lara* bring their pounds too.

"Thy caterer Price." I do not identify.

Charles Aders was a friend of Robinson's, and through him of Lamb's: a collector of pictures, particularly of the German school, whose house was in Euston Square. Lamb's poem "Angel Help" (see Vol. V., page 48) describes a picture in Mrs. Aders' album; and his poem "To C. Aders, Esq." (Vol. V., page 85), his collection. Crabius was, of course, Crabb Robinson.

"Madame Stael on Germany"—*De l'Allemagne.*

"Fie on such fantasies!"—"Fie on sinful luxury." See the fairies' song in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," V., 5.

"Proclus"—the Neo-Platonist, 412-485 A.D.

"'Well used,' had been the 'Pledge of Immortality.'" See *Paradise Lost*, IV., 200-201.

"Bishop Bruno." St. Bruno, Bishop of Wurzburg, author of *S. Brunonis Opera.*

"Such 'a Hare.'" Julius Charles Hare (1795-1855), who afterwards knew Coleridge, was then at Cambridge, after living at Weimar. I find no record of his translating Bruno; but this possibly was he.

"Old dragon in the Apocrypha." See "Bel and the Dragon," verse 27.

"Jimmy Boyer." The Rev. James Boyer, Headmaster of Christ's Hospital in Lamb and Coleridge's day, died in 1814. His living, the richest in the Hospital's gift, was that of Colne Engaine, which passed to the Rev. Arthur William Trollope, Headmaster of Christ's Hospital until 1826. Boyer had been a Spartan, and Coleridge and he had had passages, but in the main Coleridge's testimony to him is favourable and kindly (see Lamb's Christ's Hospital essay, Vol. II. of this edition, and notes).

"Entail"—A punning reference to Boyer's "whipping propensities."]

LETTER 199

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. illegible. Sept. 19, 1814.]

MY dear W. I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is. . . . Owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H. owing to bad peace speculations in the Calico market (I write this to W. W., Esq. Collector of Stamp duties for the conjoint northern counties, not to W. W. Poet) I go back, and have for this many days past, to evening work, generally at the rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities. I reclaimed your book, which Hazlit has uncivilly kept, only 2 days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shatterd brain. It does not lose—rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before—but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday) that the book was like a Mount^{n}. Landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice. I perceived beauty dizzily. Now what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half day or hour even till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get 4 weeks absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin I will most gladly do what you require, tho' I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a "work" methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is to let me know from Southey, if that will be time enough for the "Quarterly," i.e. suppose it done in 3 weeks from this date (19 Sept.): if not it is my bounden duty to express my regret, and decline it. Mary thanks you and feels highly grateful for your Patent of Nobility, and acknowleges the author of Excursion as the legitimate Fountain of Honor. We both agree, that to our feeling Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a Dowry! the fact is explicable, but how few to whom it could have been renderd explicit!

The unlucky reason of the detention of Excursion was, Hazlit and we having a misunderstanding. He blowed us up about 6 months ago, since which the union hath snapt, but M. Burney borrowd it for him and after reiterated messages I only got it on

Friday. His remarks had some vigor in them, particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen*, but I forget the Passage, but the whole wore a slovenly air of dispatch and disrespect. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire, I explaind to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech. That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons—no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish Candide. I know I tried to get thro' it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the Dullness. Now, I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps.

I finish this after a raw ill bakd dinner, fast gobbled up, to set me off to office again after working there till near four. O Christ! how I wish I were a rich man, even tho' I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting thro' that Needles eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos, are you a Xtian? or is it the Pedlar and the Priest that are?

I find I miscalld that celestial splendor of the mist going off, a *sunset*. That only shews my inaccuracy of head.

Do pray indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am asham'd to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the 1st week in Octo^{r}. God send I may not be disappointed in that!

Coleridge swore in letter to me he would review Exc^{n}. in the Quarterly. Therefore, tho' *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can do anything, *when* done, I must know of him if he has anything ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclaims.

I keep writing on, knowing the Postage is no more for much writing, else so faggd & disjointed I am with damnd India house work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on "Excursion." I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed Book.

O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! From some return'd English I hear that not such a thing as a counting house is to be seen in her streets, scarce a desk—Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its gripple merchants, as Drayton hath it, "born to be the curse of this brave isle." I invoke this not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

Farewell, in haste, from a head that is ill to methodize, a stomach to digest, and all out of Tune. Better harmonies await you.

C. Lamb.

NOTE

[Wordsworth had been appointed in 1813 Distributor of Stamps for the county of Westmoreland. Lamb is writing again about *The Excursion*, which at the instigation of Southey, to whom Wordsworth had made the suggestion, he is to review for the *Quarterly*.

"Hazlitt and we having a misunderstanding." The precise cause of the trouble we do not know, but in Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, in 1811, it is said that a slight coolness had begun between the two men on account of money which Lamb did not feel justified in lending to Hazlitt. Between 1811 and 1814, however, they were friendly again. It was Hazlitt's hostile attitude to Wordsworth that brought about Robinson's split with him, although that also was mended: literary men are short haters. Hazlitt reviewed *The Excursion*—from Lamb's copy, which in itself was a cause of grievance—in *The Examiner*, in three numbers, August 21, 28 and October 2. Wordsworth had described *Candide*, in Book II., as the "dull product of a scoffer's pen." Hazlitt wrote thus:—

. . . We cannot however agree with Mr. Wordsworth that *Candide* is *dull*. It is, if our author pleases, "the production of a scoffer's pen," or it is any thing, but dull. *Rasselas* indeed is dull; but then it is privileged dulness. It may not be proper in a grave, discreet, orthodox, promising young divine, who studies his opinions in the contraction or distension of his patron's brow, to allow any merit to a work like *Candide*; but we conceive that it would have been more in character, that is, more manly, in Mr. Wordsworth, nor do we think it would have hurt the cause he espouses, if he had blotted out the epithet, after it had peevishly escaped him. Whatsoever savours of a little, narrow, inquisitorial spirit, does not sit well on a poet and a man of genius. The prejudices of a philosopher are not natural. . . .

Lamb himself made the same criticism, three years later, at Haydon's dinner party (see page 954).

Hazlitt had also said of *The Excursion* that—

Such is the severe simplicity of Mr. Wordsworth's taste, that we doubt whether he would not reject a druidical temple, or time-hallowed ruin, as too modern and artificial for his purpose. He only familiarises himself or his readers with a stone, covered with lichens, which has slept in the same spot of ground from the creation of the world, or with the rocky fissure between two mountains, caused by thunder, or with a cavern scooped out by the sea. His mind is, as it were, coeval with the primary forms of things, holds immediately from nature; and his imagination "owes no allegiance" but "to the elements."

"In the *Written Word*." See Matthew xix. 24.

"Are you a Xtian?"—referring to the sentiments of Wanderer and the Pastor—two characters of *The Excursion*.

"A *sunset*." See preceding letter to Wordsworth, page 435.

"Gripple merchants." See Drayton's lines "Upon the noble Lady Aston's departure for France." Lamb had used this quotation before, in his essay "The Good Clerk," in *The Reflector*.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Southey, dated October 20, 1814, not available for this edition (printed by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in *The Lambs*), stating that Lamb has deposited with Mr. Grosvenor Bedford, Southey's friend and correspondent, his review of *The Excursion*. "Who can cram into a strait coop of a review any serious idea of such a vast and magnificent poem?"]

LETTER 200

MARY LAMB TO BARBARA BETHAM (AGED 14)

Novr. 2, 1814.

IT is very long since I have met with such an agreeable surprise as the sight of your letter, my kind young friend, afforded me. Such a nice letter as it is too. And what a pretty hand you write. I congratulate you on this attainment with great pleasure, because I have so often felt the disadvantage of my own wretched handwriting.

You wish for London news. I rely upon your sister Ann for gratifying you in this respect, yet I have been endeavouring to recollect whom you might have seen here, and what may have happened to them since, and this effort has only brought the image of little Barbara Betham, unconnected with any other person, so strongly before my eyes that I seem as if I had no other subject to write upon. Now I think I see you with your feet propped upon the fender, your two hands spread out upon your knees—an attitude you always chose when we were in familiar confidential conversation together—telling me long stories of your own home, where now you say you are "Moping on with the same thing every day," and which then presented nothing but pleasant recollections to your mind. How well I remember your quiet steady face bent over your book. One day, conscience struck at having wasted so much of your precious time in reading, and feeling yourself, as you prettily said, "quite useless to me," you went to my drawers and hunted out some unhemmed pocket-handkerchiefs, and by no means could I prevail upon you to resume your story books till you had hemmed them all. I remember, too, your teaching my little maid to read—your sitting with her a whole evening to console her for the death of her sister; and that she in her turn endeavoured to become a comforter to you, the next evening, when you wept at the sight of Mrs. Holcroft, from whose school you had recently eloped because you were not partial to sitting in the stocks. Those tears, and a few you once dropped when my brother teased you about

your supposed fondness for an apple dumpling, were the only interruptions to the calm contentedness of your unclouded brow. We still remain the same as you left us, neither taller nor wiser, or perceptibly older, but three years must have made a great alteration in you. How very much, dear Barbara, I should like to see you!

We still live in Temple Lane, but I am now sitting in a room you never saw. Soon after you left us we we[re] distressed by the cries of a cat, which seemed to proceed from the garrets adjoining to ours, and only separated from ours by a locked door on the farther side of my brother's bedroom, which you know was the little room at the top of the kitchen stairs. We had the lock forced and let poor puss out from behind a pannel of the wainscot, and she lived with us from that time, for we were in gratitude bound to keep her, as she had introduced us to four untenanted, unowned rooms, and by degrees we have taken possession of these unclaimed apartments—First putting up lines to dry our clothes, then moving my brother's bed into one of these, more commodious than his own room. And last winter, my brother being unable to pursue a work he had begun, owing to the kind interruptions of friends who were more at leisure than himself, I persuaded him that he might write at his ease in one of these rooms, as he could not then hear the door knock, or hear himself denied to be at home, which was sure to make him call out and convict the poor maid in a fib. Here, I said, he might be almost really not at home. So I put in an old grate, and made him a fire in the largest of these garrets, and carried in one table, and one chair, and bid him write away, and consider himself as much alone as if he were in a new lodging in the midst of Salisbury Plain, or any other wide unfrequented place where he could expect few visitors to break in upon his solitude. I left him quite delighted with his new acquisition, but in a few hours he came down again with a sadly dismal face. He could do nothing, he said, with those bare whitewashed walls before his eyes. He could not write in that dull unfurnished prison.

The next day, before he came home from his office, I had gathered up various bits of old carpetting to cover the floor; and, to a little break the blank look of the bare walls, I hung up a few old prints that used to ornament the kitchen, and after dinner, with great boast of what an improvement I had made, I took Charles once more into his new study. A week of busy labours followed, in which I think you would not have disliked to have been our assistant. My brother and I almost covered the walls with prints, for which purpose he cut out every print from every book in his old library, coming in every now and then to ask my leave to strip a fresh poor author—which he might not do, you know, without my

permission, as I am elder sister. There was such pasting, such consultation where their portraits, and where the series of pictures from Ovid, Milton, and Shakespear would show to most advantage, and in what obscure corner authors of humbler note might be allowed to tell their stories. All the books gave up their stores but one, a translation from Ariosto, a delicious set of four and twenty prints, and for which I had marked out a conspicuous place; when lo! we found at the moment the scissars were going to work that a part of the poem was printed at the back of every picture. What a cruel disappointment! To conclude this long story about nothing, the poor despised garret is now called the print room, and is become our most favorite sitting room.

Your sister Ann will tell you that your friend Louisa is going to France. Miss Skepper is out of town, Mrs. Reynolds desires to be remembered to you, and so does my neighbour Mrs. Norris, who was your doctress when you were unwell, her three little children are grown three big children. The Lions still live in Exeter Change. Returning home through the Strand, I often hear them roar about twelve oclock at night. I never hear them without thinking of you, because you seemed so pleased with the sight of them, and said your young companions would stare when you told them you had seen a Lion.

And now my dear Barbara fare well, I have not written such a long letter a long time, but I am very sorry I had nothing amusing to write about. Wishing you may pass happily through the rest of your school days, and every future day of your life,

I remain, your affectionate Friend,

M. Lamb.

My brother sends his love to you, with the kind remembrance your letter shewed you have of us as I was. He joins with me in respects to your good father and mother, and to your brother John, who, if I do not mistake his name, is your tall young brother who was in search of a fair lady with a large fortune. Ask him if he has found her yet. You say you are not so tall as Louisa—you must be, you cannot so degenerate from the rest of your family. Now you have begun, I shall hope to have the pleasure of hearing from [you] again. I shall always receive a letter from you with very great delight.

Note

[This charming letter is to a younger sister of Matilda Betham.

What the work was which in 1814 drove Lamb into an empty room I do not know. It may have been something which came to nought. Beyond the essay on Tailors (see Vol. I., page 172) and

a few brief scraps for *The Champion* he did practically nothing that has survived until some verses in 1818, a few criticisms in 1819, and in 1820 the first of the *Elia* essays for the *London Magazine*. Louisa was Louisa Holcroft, about to go to France with her mother and step-father, James Kenney. Miss Skepper was Basil Montagu's step-daughter, afterwards the wife of B. W. Procter (Barry Cornwall). Exeter Change, where there was a menagerie, was in the Strand (see note on page 217). There is a further reference to the tallness of John Betham in Lamb's letter to Landor in 1832 (see page 889).]

LETTER 201 (*See Letter* 195).

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN SCOTT

Dated at end: Dec. 12, 1814.

SIR, I am sorry to seem to go off my agreement, but very particular circumstances have happened to hinder my fulfillment of it at present. If any single Essays ever occur to me in future, you shall have the refusal of them. Meantime I beg you to consider the thing as at an end.

Yours,
with thanks & acknowlg^{nt}
C. LAMB.

Monday ev: 12 Dec., 1814.

LETTER 202

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. Dec. 28, 1814.]

DEAR W. your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of the Excursion does toto cœlo differ in his notion of a country life from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But with a little explanation you and B. may be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London tailor. What freaks Tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside themselves, rather than in harmony with the common

moderate self enjoym^{t}. of the rest mankind. A flying tailor, I venture to say, is no more in rerum naturâ than a flying horse or a Gryphon. His wheeling his airy flight from the precipice you mention had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the act of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'Tis the common uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again the person who makes his smiles to be *heard*, is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac taylor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substitute light headedness for light heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grinning tailor would shock me.—Enough of tailors.—

The "'scapes" of the great god Pan who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas. W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Loft wrote to M. M. Phillips (now S^{r}. Rich^{d}.) I remember his noticing a metaphysical article by Pan, signed H. and adding "I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas." Hylas has [? had] put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Loft (unfounded as we thought it) was to being realized! I can conceive him being "good to all that wander in that perilous flood." One J. Scott (I know no more) is edit^{r}. of *Champ^{n}*.

Where is Coleridge?

That Review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written, would have excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long as it will seem to have done from its postponement. I write with great difficulty and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off Gin. I hope you will see good will in the thing. I had a difficulty to perform not to make it all Panegyrick; I have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am in mind distant from you or your Poem, but that both are close to me among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the Review. Then, I was puzzled about extracts and determined upon

not giving one that had been in the Examiner, for Extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allowce. of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of Sr. W. Irthing and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the Poem. H. had given the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first Review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Giffard and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect. Farewell. Love to all. Mary keeps very bad. C. Lamb.

Note

[Lamb seems to have sent Wordsworth a copy of *The Champion* containing his essay, signed Burton, Junior, "On the Melancholy of Tailors." Wordsworth's letter of reply, containing the examples of other tailors, is no longer in existence. "A greater hell" is a pun: the receptacle into which tailors throw scraps is called a hell. See Lamb's "Satan in Search of a Wife" and notes (Vol. V., pages 110 and 344) for more on this topic.

"W. H."—Hazlitt: referring again to his review of *The Excursion* in *The Examiner*.

"The melancholy Jew"—Mr. Lyon Levy, a diamond merchant, who jumped off the Monument commemorating the Fire of London, on January 18, 1810. "Wheeling his airy flight" is an adaptation of Gray's beetle which "wheels its droning flight" in the "Elegy."

"The 'scapes' of the great god Pan." A reference to Hazlitt's flirtation with a farmer's daughter in the Lake country, ending almost in immersion (see page 376). Hylas, seeking for water with a pitcher, so enraptured the nymphs of the river with his beauty that they drew him in.

Capell Lofft (1751-1824) was a lawyer and philanthropist of independent means who threw himself into many popular discussions and knew many literary men. He was the patron of Robert Bloomfield. Lamb was amused by him, but annoyed that his initials were also C. L. "M. M. Phillips"—for *Monthly Magazine*, which Phillips published.

"Good to all that wander in that perilous flood." See *Lycidas*, 184, 185.

"One J. Scott." See note on page 434.

"Where is Coleridge?" Coleridge was now at Calne, in Wiltshire, with the Morgans. He was being treated for the drug habit by a Dr. Page.

"That Review." Lamb's review of *The Excursion*, which, although the *Quarterly* that contains it is dated October, 1814, must have been delayed until the end of the year. The episode

of Sir W. Irthing (really Sir Alfred Irthing) is in Book VII. Lamb's foreboding as to Gifford's action was only too well justified, as we shall see. Lamb's statement that it is his first review is interesting in connection with Letters 111 and 112.

"Mary keeps very bad." Mary Lamb, we learn from Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, had been taken ill some time between December 11 and December 24, having tired herself by writing an article on needlework for the *British Lady's Magazine* (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 176). She did not recover until February, 1815.]

LETTER 203

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. illegible. ? Early Jan., 1815.]

DEAR Wordsworth, I told you my Review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the Quarterly is a spurious one which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palm'd upon it for mine. I never felt more vexd in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it out of spite at me because he once sufferd me to be called a lunatic in his Thing. The *language* he has alterd throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was in point of composition the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ, and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm if it had any is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one. I have not the cursed alteration by me, I shall never look at it again, but for a specimen I remember I had said the Poet of the Excurs[n]. "walks thro' common forests as thro' some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher lovelays." It is now (besides half a dozen alterations in the same half dozen lines) "but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him"—that is one I remember. But that would have been little, putting his damnd Shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) in stead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend—for I reckon myself a dab at *Prose*—verse I leave to my betters—God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter. I have read "It won't do." But worse than altering words, he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your "scheme

of harmonies," as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the Extracts as if they came in as a part of the text, naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as without conjuration no man could tell what I was driving it [? at]. A proof of it you may see (tho' not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words: I had spoken something about "natural methodism—" and after follows "and therefore the tale of Margaret sh^d. have been postponed" (I forget my words, or his words): now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before, as they are from the 104th psalm. The passage whence I deduced it has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are founded. I know how sore a word alterd makes one, but indeed of this Review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew, but for the *writing part* of it, I was fully satisfied. I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone, and what is left is of course the worse for their having been there, the eyes are pulld out and the bleeding sockets are left. I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamd to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labors of years turn'd into contempt by scoundrels.

But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression, (I know there were many) every warm expression, there was nothing else, is vulgarised and frozen—but if they catch me in their camps again let them spitchcock me. They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it, and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford I suppose never wa[i]ved a right he had since he commencd author. God confound him and all caitiffs. C. L.

NOTE

[For the full understanding of this letter it is necessary to read Lamb's review (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 160).

William Gifford (1756-1826), editor of the *Quarterly*, had been a shoemaker's apprentice. Lamb calls him Mr. Baviad Gifford on account of his satires, *The Mœviad* and *The Baviad*, against the

Della Cruscan school of poetry, of which Robert Merry had been the principal member. Some of Lamb's grudge against Gifford, which was of old standing (see notes to Lamb's review, Vol. I., page 446), was repaid in his sonnet "St. Crispin to Mr. Gifford" (see Vol. V. of this edition, page 104). Gifford's connection with Canning, in the *Anti-Jacobin*, could not have improved his position with Lamb.

"I have read 'It won't do.'" A reference to the review of *The Excursion* in the *Edinburgh* for November, by Jeffrey, beginning "This will never do."]

LETTER 204

CHARLES LAMB TO MR. SARGUS

[Dated at end: Feb. 23, 1815.]

D[R] Sargus—This is to give you notice that I have parted with the Cottage to Mr. Grig Jun[r]. to whom you will pay rent from Michaelmas last. The rent that was due at Michaelmas I do not wish you to pay me. I forgive it you as you may have been at some expences in repairs.

Yours
CH. LAMB.

Inner Temple Lane, London,
23 Feb., 1815.

NOTE

[In 1812 Lamb inherited, through his godfather, Francis Fielde, who is mentioned in the *Elia* essay "My First Play," a property called Button Snap, near Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire, consisting of a small cottage and about an acre of ground. In 1815 he sold it for £50, and the foregoing letter is an intimation of the transaction to his tenant. The purchaser, however, was not a Mr. Grig, but a Mr. Greg (see notes to "My First Play" in Vol. II. of this edition, page 372). I give there also a picture of the cottage.

I append here an undated letter to Joseph Hume which belongs to a time posterior to the sale of the cottage. It refers to Tuthill's candidature for the post of physician to St. Luke's Hospital.

The letter is printed in Mr. Kegan Paul's *William Godwin: His Friends and Acquaintances*, as though it were written to Godwin, and all Lamb's editors follow in assuming the Philosopher to be the recipient, but internal evidence practically proves that Hume was addressed; for there is the reference to Mrs. Hume and her daughters, and Godwin lived not in Kensington but in Skinner Street.]

LETTER 205

CHARLES LAMB TO JOSEPH HUME

"Bis dat qui dat cito."

I HATE the pedantry of expressing that in another language which we have sufficient terms for in our own. So in plain English I very much wish you to give your vote to-morrow at Clerkenwell, instead of Saturday. It would clear up the brows of my favourite candidate, and stagger the hands of the opposite party. It commences at nine. How easy, as you come from Kensington (*à propos*, how is your excellent family?) to turn down Bloomsbury, through Leather Lane (avoiding Lay Stall St. for the disagreeableness of the name). Why, it brings you in four minutes and a half to the spot renowned on northern milestones, "where Hicks' Hall formerly stood." There will be good cheer ready for every independent freeholder; where you see a green flag hang out go boldly in, call for ham, or beef, or what you please, and a mug of Meux's Best. How much more gentleman-like to come in the front of the battle, openly avowing one's sentiments, than to lag in on the last day, when the adversary is dejected, spiritless, laid low. Have the first cut at them. By Saturday you'll cut into the mutton. I'd go cheerfully myself, but I am no freeholder (Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium), but I sold it for £50. If they'd accept a copyholder, we clerks are naturally *copy*-holders.

By the way, get Mrs. Hume, or that agreeable Amelia or Caroline, to stick a bit of green in your hat. Nothing daunts the adversary more than to wear the colours of your party. Stick it in cockade-like. It has a martial, and by no means disagreeable effect.

Go, my dear freeholder, and if any chance calls you out of this transitory scene earlier than expected, the coroner shall sit lightly on your corpse. He shall not too anxiously enquire into the circumstances of blood found upon your razor. That might happen to any gentleman in shaving. Nor into your having been heard to express a contempt of life, or for scolding Louisa for what Julia did, and other trifling incoherencies.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

NOTE

["Bis dat . . ."—"He who gives quickly gives twice."

"Lay Stall St." This street, which is still found in Clerkenwell, was of course named from one of the laystalls or public middens which were a feature of London when sanitation was in its infancy.

"Where Hicks' Hall formerly stood." Hicks' Hall, the old Sessions House of the County of Middlesex, stood in St. John Street, Clerkenwell, until its demolition in 1782, when the justices removed to the new Sessions House on Clerkenwell Green. The milestones on the Great North Road, which had long been measured from Hicks' Hall were reinscribed "—— Miles from the spot where Hicks' Hall formerly stood." Thus Hicks' Hall remained a household word long after it had ceased to exist. The adventures of Jedediah Jones in search of "the spot where Hicks' Hall formerly stood" are amusingly set forth in Knight's *London*, Vol. I., pages 242-244.

"Fuimus Troes . . ." (*Æneid*, II., 325)—"We once were Trojans; Troy once stood."

We meet Hume's daughters again in Letter 517.]

LETTER 206

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. partly illegible. April 7, 1815.]

The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest Loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to *Dorothea*. Will none of you ever be in London again?

DEAR Wordsw^th^. you have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a Character in Antithet. manner which I do not know why you left out; the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it in my mind less complete; and one admirable line gone (or something come in stead of it) "the stone-chat and the glancing sand-piper," which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice. I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the "friendly reader," but the malicious will take it to himself. Damn 'em; if

you give 'em an inch &c. The preface is noble and such as you should write: I wish I could set my name to it—Imprimatur—but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a door-keeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes which are new to me are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those, of which I had no previous knowlege, the four yew trees and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me—"Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow—" It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of—it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking-on for years for. Laodamia is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation. Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters without naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson Editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way which comes not every day. The Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is that your Power of Music reminded me of his poem of the balad singer in the Seven Dials. Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A. B. C., which after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's *Principia*. I was lately fatiguing myself with going thro' a volume of fine words by *L^d. Thurlow*—excellent words, and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regale—but what an aching vacuum of matter; I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elisabeth poets; from thence I turned to V. Bourne—what a sweet unpretending pretty-mannered *matter-ful* creature, sucking from every flower, making a flower of every thing, his diction all Latin and his thoughts all English. Bless him, Latin wasn't good enough for him, why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in.

I am almost sorry that you printed Extracts from those first Poems, or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do all together. Besides they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiousity. I have

hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week—these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading.

We were glad to see the poems by a female friend. The one of the wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better-instructed. As it is, Expect a formal criticism on the Poems of your female friend, and she must expect it.

I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged and like to be. On Friday I was at office from 10 in the morning (two hours dinner except) to 11 at night, last night till 9. My business and office business in general has increased so. I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till 4—and do not keep a holyday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red letter days, and some fine days besides which I used to dub Nature's holydays. [I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life I may reckon two thirds as dead, for Time that a man may call his own is his Life, and hard work and thinking about it taints even the leisure hours, stains Sunday with workday contemplations—this is Sunday, and the headache I have is part late hours at work the 2 preceding nights and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterwds. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke,] and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort—

> To them each evening had its glittering star
> And every Sabbath day its golden sun—

[To such straits am I driven for the Life of life, Time—O that from that superfluity of Holyday leisure my youth wasted "Age might but take some hours youth wanted not.—" N.B. I have left off spirituous liquors for 4 or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting. Farewell, dear Wordsworth.]

NOTE

[Wordsworth had just brought out, with Longmans, his *Poems . . . including Lyrical Ballads and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author*, 1815, in two volumes. The "Character in the Antithetical Manner" was omitted from all editions of Wordsworth's poems between 1800 and 1836. In the 1800 version of "Rural Architecture" there had been these last lines, expunged

in the editions of 1805 and 1815, but restored with a slight alteration in later editions :—

> —Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works
> In Paris and London, 'mong Christians or Turks,
> Spirits busy to do and undo:
> At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag,
> —Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the Crag;
> And I'll build up a Giant with you.

In the original form of the "Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree" there had been these lines :—

> His only visitants a straggling sheep,
> The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper.

Wordsworth had altered them to :—

> His only visitants a straggling sheep,
> The stone-chat, or the sand-lark, restless Bird,
> Piping along the margin of the lake.

In the 1820 edition Wordsworth put back the original form.

"Those scoundrels." Principally the critic of the *Edinburgh*, Jeffrey, but Wordsworth's assailants generally.

"That substitution of a shell." In the original draft of "The Blind Highland Boy" the adventurous voyage was made in

> A Household Tub, like one of those
> Which women use to wash their clothes.

In the new version the vessel was a turtle's shell.

"The preface." Wordsworth quotes from Lamb's essay in *The Reflector* on the genius of Hogarth, referring to the passage as "the language of one of my most esteemed Friends." It is Lamb's description of Imagination as that which "draws all things to one, which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect."

"The four yew trees." The poem is called "Yew Trees." This is the passage in question :—

> But worthier still of note
> Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
> Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
> Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
> Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
> Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
> That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
> Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
> By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
> Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
> Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
> With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes

May meet at noontide: Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

"Picture of Milton." This portrait, a reproduction of which I give on the opposite page, is now in America, the property of the New York Public Library, by whose permission the reproduction has been made.

"V. Bourne." Lamb afterwards translated some of Bourne's *Poemata* and wrote critically of them in the *Englishman's Magazine* in 1831 (see Vol. V., page 61, and Vol. I., page 337).

"Lord Thurlow." But see Letter No. 445 and note.

"Extracts from those first Poems." Wordsworth included extracts from juvenile pieces, which had been first published in his *Descriptive Sketches*, 1793.

"A female friend"—Dorothy Wordsworth. The three poems were "Address to a Child" (beginning, "What way does the Wind come from?"), "The Mother's Return" and "The Cottager to Her Infant."

"To them each evening had its glittering star . . ."—*The Excursion*, Book V.

"Age might but take some hours . . ." From Wordsworth's "Small Celandine":—

Age might but take the things Youth needed not.]

LETTER 207

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. April 28, 1815.]

Excuse this maddish letter: I am too tired to write in formâ—

DEAR Wordsw^th^. The more I read of your two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgm^ts^ for them in more than one short letter. The Night Piece to which you refer me I meant fully to have noticed, but the fact is I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me

JOHN MILTON

THE PORTRAIT WHICH ONCE BELONGED TO LAMB

Reproduced from the original in the Lenox Library, New York

—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can,—talk about Vincent Bourne or any casual image instead of that which I had meditated—by the way, I must look out V. B. for you.—So I had meant to have mentioned Yarrow Visited, with that stanza, "But thou that didst appear so fair—" than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry—yet the poem on the whole seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which in what preceded it you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined in the most delicate manner to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the two last—this has all fine, except perhaps that *that* of "studious ease and generous cares" has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. The farmer of Tilsbury vale is a charming counter part to poor Susan, with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path which is so fine in the Old Thief and the boy by his side, which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition. Susan stood for the representative of poor Rus in Urbe. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten. "Fast volumes of vapour" &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop and contemplating the whirling phenomenon thro' blurred optics; but to term her a poor outcast seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away,—but how I can be brought in felo de omittendo for that Ending to the boy builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that "Light hearted boys, I will build up a giant with you." It comes naturally with a warm holyday and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer Amulet that I tye round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a Maying. (N.B.) I don't often go out a maying.—*Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the Pun? Young Romilly is divine, the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless. I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other Loves. Shakspeare had done something for the filial in Cordelia, and by implication for the fatherly too in Lear's resentment —he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat and flattering—what's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that

I know them to be good. Apropos—when I first opened upon the just mentioned poem, in a careless tone I said to Mary as if putting a riddle "What is good for a bootless bean?" to which with infinite presence of mind (as the jest book has it) she answered, a "shoeless pea." It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the 2d I make—you distinguish well in your old preface between the verses of Dr. Johnson of the man in the Strand, and that from the babes of the wood. I was thinking whether taking your own glorious lines—

> And for the love was in her soul
> For the youthful Romilly—

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old Balads, and just altering it to—

> And from the great respect she felt
> For Sir Samuel Romilly—

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression and poetic feeling nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life, if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a Spiritual taste of that White Doe you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest*, i.e. printed. All things read raw tome in MS.—to compare magna parvis, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is Peter Bell. But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the Supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by Imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene beastly Peter Pindar in a dispute on Milton say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another it was in knowing what good verse was. Who lookd over your proof sheets, and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

My brothers picture of Milton is very finely painted, that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half hour at a time. *Yet* tho' I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of petit (or petite, how do you spell it) querulousness about. Yet hang it, now I remember better, there is not—it is calm, melancholy, and poetical.

One of the copies you sent had precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of 2d vol. with a sheet of 1st. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectifyd. It gave me in the first impetus of cutting the leaves just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading "no thoroughfare." Robinson's is entire; he is gone to Bury his father.

I wish you would write more criticism, about Spenser &c. I think I could say something about him myself—but Lord bless me —these "merchants and their spicy drugs" which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I "engross," when I should pen a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffick, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization and wealth and amity and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowlege of the face of the globe—and rot the very firs of the forest that look so romantic alive, and die into desks. Vale.

Yours dear W. and all yours' C. LAMB.

[*Added at foot of the first page:*] N.B. Dont read that Q. Review—I will never look into another.

NOTE

[Lamb continues his criticism of the 1815 edition of Wordsworth's *Poems*. The "Night Piece" begins—

The sky is overcast.

The stanza from "Yarrow Visited" is quoted on page 557. The poem followed "Yarrow Unvisited" in the volume. The one exquisite verse in "Yarrow Unvisited" first ran:—

Your cottage seems a bower of bliss,
It promises protection
To studious ease and generous cares
And every chaste affection.

Wordsworth altered to—

A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts that nestle there,
The brood of chaste affection.

"Poor Susan" had in the 1800 version ended thus:—

Poor Outcast! return—to receive thee once more
The house of thy Father will open its door,
And thou once again, in thy plain russet gown,
May'st hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own.

Wordsworth expunged this stanza in the 1815 edition. "Fast volumes of vapour" should be "Bright volumes of vapour." For the Old Thief see "The Two Thieves."

"*Felo de omittendo.*" See the preceding letter, where Lamb remonstrated with Wordsworth for omitting the last lines from "Rural Architecture." Wordsworth seems to have charged Lamb with the criticism that decided their removal.

"The Pun." Canon Ainger pointed out that Hood, in his "Ode to Melancholy," makes the same pun very happily:—

> Even as the blossoms of the May,
> Whose fragrance ends in must.

"Young Romilly." In "The Force of Prayer," which opens with the question—

> What is good for a bootless bene?

Later Mary Lamb made another joke, when at Munden's farewell performance she said, "Sic transit gloria Munden!"

The stanzas from which Lamb quotes run:—

> "What is good for a bootless bene?"
> The Falconer to the Lady said;
> And she made answer "Endless sorrow!"
> In that she knew that her Son was dead.
>
> She knew it by the Falconer's words,
> And from the look of the Falconer's eye;
> And from the love which was in her soul
> For her youthful Romilly.

Sir Samuel Romilly (1757-1818), the lawyer and law reformer, was the great opponent of capital punishment for small offences.

In the preface to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, etc., Wordsworth had quoted Dr. Johnson's prosaic lines:—

> I put my hat upon my head
> And walked into the Strand,
> And there I met another man
> Whose hat was in his hand.

—contrasting them with these lines from the "Babes in the Wood":—

> These pretty Babes with hand in hand
> Went wandering up and down;
> But never more they saw the Man
> Approaching from the Town.

"Peter Pindar." John Wolcot (1738-1819), whom Lamb had met at Henry Rogers', brother of the poet.

"*Ordebo.*" Wordsworth quoted Virgil's lines (Eclogue I., 75, 76):—

> Non ego vos posthac, viridi projectus in antro,
> Dumosa pendere procul de rupe ordebo [videbo].

"Merchants and their spicy drugs." See *Paradise Lost*, II., 639, 640.]

LETTER 208

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

London, May 6th, 1815.

DEAR Southey,—I have received from Longman a copy of "Roderick," with the author's compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way; the "Excursion," Wordsworth's two last vols., and now "Roderick," have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. "Kehama" is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in "Roderick;" my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and faiths; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against omnipotences, such disturbances of faith to the centre. The more potent the more painful the spell. Jove and his brotherhood of gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such contests; but your Oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes with Jupiter. I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of "Kehama," not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling.

But "Roderick" is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the "Joan of Arc." It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than "Madoc." I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travel, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connection as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, innkeepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me when I come

to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it—no need, I hope, yet.

The parts I have been most pleased with, both on 1st and 2nd readings, perhaps, are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise—the retreat of Palayo's family first discovered,—his being made king—"For acclamation one form must serve, *more solemn for* the *breach of old observances*." Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso:

> "Towards the troop he spread his arms,
> As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
> And carried to all spirits *with the act*
> Its affluent inspiration."

It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the Cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous attitude can no where be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent, but dignified motion.

I must read again Landor's "Julian." I have not read it some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character—only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine Poem by trusting to it.

The notes to your poem I have not read again; but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em, one of the serpent Penance, is serious enough, now I think on't.

Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him like a re-appearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London, as has been the case whylear.

I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day-hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks, and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My sister desires her kind respects to Mrs S. and to all at Keswick.

Yours truly, C. Lamb.

The next Present I look for is the "White Doe." Have you seen Mat. Betham's "Lay of Marie?" I think it very delicately pretty as to sentiment, &c.

Note

[Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, was published in 1814. Driven from his throne by the Moors, Roderick had dis-

guised himself as a monk under the name of Father Maccabee. *The Curse of Kehama* had been published in 1810; *Madoc* in 1805; *Joan of Arc* (see Letter 3 &c.) in 1796. Southey was now Poet Laureate.

"I never read books of travels." Writing to Dilke, of *The Athenæum*, for books, some years later, Lamb makes a point of "no natural history or useful learning" being sent—such as Giraffes, Pyramids and Adventures in Central Africa. None the less, as a boy, he tells us, he had read Bruce and applied his Abyssinian methods to the New River (see the *Elia* essay on Newspapers).

"The crow on the sand." In "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale":—

> As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.
>
> Verse xii., line 4.

Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime is in Book X.; the retreat of Pelayo's family discovered, in Book XVI.; Pelayo made king, in Book XVIII. Landor's *Count Julian*, published in 1812, dealt with the same story, Florinda, whom Roderick violated, having been the daughter of the Count, a Spanish Goth. Julian devoted himself to Roderick's ruin, even turning traitor for the purpose. Southey's notes are tremendous—sometimes filling all but a line or two of the page.

"The *White Doe*." Wordsworth's poem *The White Doe of Rylstone*, to be published this year, 1815.

"Matilda Betham's *Lay of Marie*." See note on page 477.]

LETTER 209

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Aug. 9th, 1815.

DEAR Southey,—Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W., which travels with this, but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends the Colliers, whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate, remember to have heard him say, that Father Pardo had effected his escape (the cunning greasy rogue), and to the best of their belief is at present in Paris. To my thinking, it is a small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd. I hear Buonaparte has sued his habeas corpus, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

Your boute-feu (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind. Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the pope was burnt in form. Do you provide any verses

on this occasion? Your fear for Hartley's intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the Chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His lordship took Mr. Betty from under the paternal wing. I think at least he should go through a course of matter-of-fact with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr. Hedges, who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporal and material verities. He'd get these crack-brain metaphysics out of the young gentleman's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o' nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions; I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Any thing awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Hartley, if not too inveterate. Don't you think Louis the Desirable is in a sort of quandary?

After all, Bonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in his favour? Well, we shall see. C. Lamb.

Note

["Father Pardo." I have not traced this fat friar.

"The excellent Dodd." The Rev. William Dodd (1729-1777), compiler of *The Beauties of Shakespeare*, was hanged for forgery in 1777, when Lamb was two years old. The case caused immense public interest.

"Buonaparte." Waterloo had been fought on June 18.

"Your boute-feu." The bonfire in honour of Waterloo flamed on Skiddaw on August 21. See Southey's description in his letter to his brother, August 23, 1815 (*Life and Correspondence*, Vol. IV., page 120).

"Poet Settle." Elkanah Settle (1648-1724) was chief organiser of the procession on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birthday in 1680, when the Pope was burned in effigy.

Hartley Coleridge, now almost nineteen, after having been to school at Ambleside, had been sent to Oxford through the instru-

mentality of his uncle, Southey. At the time of Lamb's letter he was staying at Calne with his father. Mr. Betty was the Young Roscius, whom we have already seen, who, after retiring from the Phenomenon stage of his career in 1808, had since been to school and to Cambridge upon his earnings, and had now become an adult actor. Poole was Thomas Poole of Nether Stowey, whom we have seen: Coleridge's old and very sensible friend. Tobin would probably be James Webbe Tobin, the brother of the dramatist. He had died in 1814 (see Letter No. 153).

"I am going to stand godfather." To what child I do not know.

"Louis the Desirable"—Louis XVIII., styled by the Royalists "*Le Desiré.*"]

LETTER 210

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. August 9, 1815.]

9th Aug. 1815.

DEAR Wordsworth, We acknowlege with pride the receit of both your hand writings, and desire to be ever had in kindly remembrance by you both and by Dorothy. Miss Hutchinson has just transmitted us a letter containing, among other chearful matter, the annunciation of a child born. Nothing of consequence has turned up in our parts since your departure. Mary and I felt quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St. Giles's. We wishd we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowleging for the share we had enjoyed of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of too-much-cordiality. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an after thought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are, every day, in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love. Robinson is on the Circuit. Our Panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, &c.—There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*. Be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. *Books* are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too

much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance methinks is too confined and straitlaced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend; why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and thro' all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me. Not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him any thing in return would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I know he meant a freewill offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome. Alsager (whom you call Alsinger—and indeed he is rather *singer* than *sager*, no reflection upon his naturals neither) is well and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he and those of his constitution keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or have they any? or are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat under done, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way in a wantonness of provocation, and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture, tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it, and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as hot as brimstone, and I'd venture the roof of my mouth that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happinessed friend is picking his crackers, not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and having performed it, expect to be picked (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or could have his house set on fire, or ever want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own impassibility. I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos. M. Burney has been to Calais and has come home a travelld Monsieur. He speaks nothing but the Gallic Idiom. Field is on circuit. So now I believe I have given account of most that you saw at our Cabin. Have you seen a curious letter in Morn. Chron., by C. Ll., the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus. That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences. You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which I pray God may prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department, which if it take place will produce me more time, i.e. my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation which will knock at my nerves another

way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at 4 o Clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had. As you say, how a man can fill 3 volumes up with an Essay on the Drama is wonderful. I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject, and yet I dare say * * * * * * * * * * * [*] as Von Slagel * * * Did you ever read Charron on Wisdom? or Patrick's Pilgrim? if neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl on Job, six Folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing Warehousekeepers Acc^ts. and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a Lord of Liberty I shall be. I shall dance and skip and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow and throw 'em at rich men's night caps, and talk blank verse, hoity toity, and sing "A Clerk I was in London Gay," ban, ban, Ca-Caliban, like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that ally. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck. Good be to you all. C. Lamb.

Note

["A child born." This was George Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's nephew.

"Our Panegyrist"—Thomas Noon Talfourd. This is Lamb's first mention of his future biographer. Talfourd was then just twenty, had published some poems, and was reading law with Chitty, the special pleader. He had met Lamb at the beginning of 1815 through William Evans, owner of *The Pamphleteer*, had scoured London for a copy of *Rosamund Gray*, and had written of Lamb in *The Pamphleteer* as one of the chief of living poets. He then became an ardent supporter of Wordsworth, his principal criticism of whom was written later for the *New Monthly Magazine*.

"If presents be not the soul of friendship." Lamb's "Thoughts on Presents of Game," written many years later for *The Athenæum*, carries on this theme (see Vol. I., page 343).

"Alsager." Thomas Massa Alsager, a friend of Crabb Robinson, and through him of Lamb, was a strange blend of the financial and the musical critic. He controlled the departments of Money and Music for *The Times* for many years.

"Heautontimorumenos"—"The Self-Tormentor." The name of a comedy by Terence.

"Field"—Barron Field (see note on page 502).

"C. Ll."—Capell Lofft (see note on page 451). He wrote to the *Morning Chronicle* for August 2 and 3, 1815, as Lamb says. The gist of his argument was in this sentence:—

[7th para.] Bonaparte with the concurrence of the *Admiralty*, is ~~within~~ the limits of British *local* allegiance. He is a *temporary*, considered as private, though not a natural born *subject*, and as *such* within the limits of 31 Car. II. the *Habeas Corpus* Act, [etc.].

On August 10 he wrote again, quoting the lines from "The Tempest":—

> The nobler action is,
> In virtue than in vengeance:—He being here
> The sole drift of our purpose, wrath here ends;
> Not a frown further.

"An Essay on the Drama." This cryptic passage refers, I imagine, to a translation by John Black, afterwards the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, of August Von Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, 2 vols., 1815. Does Lamb mean —"And yet, I dare say, *I know as much* as Von Slagel *did*."

"Charron on Wisdom" and "Patrick's Pilgrim." Pierre Charron's *De la Sagesse*, and Bishop Patrick's *Parable of the Pilgrim*, 1664, a curious independent anticipation of Bunyan. Lamb had written of both these books in a little essay contributed in 1813 to *The Examiner*, entitled "Books with One Idea in them" (see Vol. I., page 153).

"Caryl on Job"—*Commentary on the Book of Job*, 12 vols., 4°, 1651-1666, by Joseph Caryl.

"Make mouths at the invisible event" ("Hamlet," IV., 4, 50).

"A Clerk I was in London Gay." A song sung in Colman's "Inkle and Yarico," which Lamb actually did use as a motto for his *Elia* essay "The Superannuated Man," dealing with his emancipation, ten years later.

"Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban." See "The Tempest," II., 2, 188.]

LETTER 211

MARY AND CHARLES LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

[Dated at end: August 20, 1815.]

MY dear friend, It is less fatigue to me to write upon lines, and I want to fill up as much of my paper as I can in gratitude for the pleasure your very kind letter has given me. I began to think I should not hear from you; knowing you were not fond of letter-writing I quite forgave you, but I was very sorry. Do not make a point of conscience of it, but if ever you feel an inclination you cannot think how much a few lines would delight me. I am happy to hear so good an account of your sister and child, and sincerely wish her a perfect recovery. I am glad you did not arrive sooner, you escaped much anxiety. I have just received

a very chearful letter from Mrs. Morgan—the following I have picked out as I think it will interest you. "Hartley Coleridge has been with us for two months. Morgan invited him to pass the long vacation here in the hope that his father would be of great service to him in his studies: he seems to be extremely amiable. I believe he is to spend the next vacation at Lady Beaumont's. Your old friend Coleridge is very hard at work at the preface to a new Edition which he is just going to publish in the same form as Mr. Wordsworth's—at first the preface was not to exceed five or six pages, it has however grown into a work of great importance. I believe Morgan has already written nearly two hundred pages. The title of it is '*Autobiographia Literaria:*' to which are added '*Sybilline Leaves,*' a collection of Poems by the same author. Calne has lately been much enlivened by an excellent company of players—last week they performed the 'Remorse' to a very crowded and brilliant audience; two of the characters were admirably well supported; at the request of the actors Morgan was behind the scenes all the time and assisted in the music &c."

Thanks to your kind interference we have had a very nice letter from Mr. Wordsworth. Of them and of you we think and talk quite with a painful regret that we did not see more of you, and that it may be so long before we meet again.

I am going to do a queer thing—I have wearied myself with writing a long letter to Mrs. Morgan, a part of which is an incoherent rambling account of a jaunt we have just been taking. I want to tell you all about it, for we so seldom do such things that it runs strangely in my head, and I feel too tired to give you other than the mere copy of the nonsense I have just been writing.

"Last Saturday was the grand feast day of the India House Clerks. I think you must have heard Charles talk of his yearly turtle feast. He has been lately much wearied with work, and, glad to get rid of all connected with it, he *used* Saturday, the feast day being a holiday, *borrowed* the Monday following, and we set off on the outside of the Cambridge Coach from Fetter Lane at eight o'clock, and were driven into Cambridge in great triumph by Hell Fire Dick five minutes before three. Richard is in high reputation, he is private tutor to the Whip Club. Journeys used to be tedious torments to me, but seated out in the open air I enjoyed every mile of the way—the first twenty miles was particularly pleasing to me, having been accustomed to go so far on that road in the Ware Stage Coach to visit my Grandmother in the days of other times.

"In my life I never spent so many pleasant hours together as I did at Cambridge. We were walking the whole time—out of one College into another. If you ask me which I like best I must

make the children's traditionary unoffending reply to all curious enquirers—'*Both.*' I liked them all best. The little gloomy ones, because they were little gloomy ones. I felt as if I could live and die in them and never wish to speak again. And the fine grand Trinity College, Oh how fine it was! And King's College Chapel, what a place! I heard the Cathedral service there, and having been no great church goer of late years, *that* and the painted windows and the general effect of the whole thing affected me wonderfully.

"I certainly like St. John's College best. I had seen least of it, having only been over it once, so, on the morning we returned, I got up at six o'clock and wandered into it by myself—by myself indeed, for there was nothing alive to be seen but one cat, who followed me about like a dog. Then I went over Trinity, but nothing hailed me there, not even a cat.

"On the Sunday we met with a pleasant thing. We had been congratulating each other that we had come alone to enjoy, as the miser his feast, all our sights greedily to ourselves, but having seen all we began to grow flat and wish for this and tother body with us, when we were accosted by a young gownsman whose face we knew, but where or how we had seen him we could not tell, and were obliged to ask his name. He proved to be a young man we had seen twice at Alsager's. He turned out a very pleasant fellow—shewed us the insides of places—we took him to our Inn to dinner, and drank tea with him in such a delicious college room, and then again he supped with us. We made our meals as short as possible, to lose no time, and walked our young conductor almost off his legs. Even when the fried eels were ready for supper and coming up, having a message from a man who we had bribed for the purpose, that then we might see Oliver Cromwell, who was *not at home* when we called to see him, we sallied out again and made him a visit by candlelight—and so ended our sights. When we were setting out in the morning our new friend came to bid us good bye, and rode with us as far as Trompington. I never saw a creature so happy as he was the whole time he was with us, he said we had put him in such good spirits that [he] should certainly pass an examination well that he is to go through in six weeks in order to qualify himself to obtain a fellowship.

"Returning home down old Fetter Lane I could hardly keep from crying to think it was all over. With what pleasure [Charles] shewed me Jesus College where Coleridge was—the barbe[r's shop] where Manning was—the house where Lloyd lived—Franklin's rooms, a young schoolfellow with whom Charles was the first time he went to Cambridge: I peeped in at his window, the room looked quite deserted—old chairs standing about in disorder that

seemed to have stood there ever since they had sate in them. I write sad nonsense about these things, but I wish you had heard Charles talk his nonsense over and over again about his visit to Franklin, and how he then first felt himself commencing gentleman and had eggs for his breakfast." Charles Lamb commencing gentleman!

A lady who is sitting by me seeing what I am doing says I remind her of her husband, who acknowledged that the first love letter he wrote to her was a copy of one he had made use of on a former occasion.

This is no letter, but if you give me any encouragement to write again you shall have one entirely to yourself: a little encouragement will do, a few lines to say you are well and remember us. I will keep this tomorrow, maybe Charles will put a few lines to it—I always send off a humdrum letter of mine with great satisfaction if I can get him to freshen it up a little at the end. Let me beg my love to your sister Johanna with many thanks. I have much pleasure in looking forward to her nice bacon, the maker of which I long have had a great desire to see.

God bless you, my dear Miss Hutchinson, I remain ever

Your affectionate friend

M. LAMB.

Augst. 20.

LETTER 211 (*continued*)

[*Charles Lamb adds*:—]

DEAR MISS HUTCHINSON, I subscribe most willingly to all my sister says of her Enjoyment at Cambridge. She was in silent raptures all the while *there*, and came home riding thro' the air (her 1st long outside journey) triumphing as if she had been *graduated*. I remember one foolish-pretty expression she made use of, "Bless the little churches how pretty they are," as those symbols of civilized life opened upon her view one after the other on this side Cambridge. You cannot proceed a mile without starting a steeple, with its little patch of villagery round it, enverduring the waste. I don't know how you will pardon part of her letter being a transcript, but writing to another Lady first (probably as the *easiest task**) it was unnatural not to give you an accot of what had so freshly delighted her, and would have been a piece of transcendant rhetorick (above her modesty) to have given two different accounts of a simple and univocal pleasure. Bless me how learned I write! but I always forget myself when I write to Ladies. One

cannot tame one's erudition down to their merely English apprehensions. But this and all other faults you will excuse from yours truly C. LAMB.

Our kindest loves to Joanna, if she will accept it from us who are merely nominal to her, and to the child and child's parent. Yours again C. L.

[*Mary Lamb adds this footnote* :—]

* "*Easiest Task.*" Not the true reason, but Charles had so connected Coleridge & Cambridge in my mind, by talking so much of him there, and a letter coming so fresh from *him*, in a manner *that was the reason* I wrote to them first. I make this apology perhaps quite unnecessarily, but I am of a very jealous temper myself, and more than once recollect having been offended at seeing kind expressions which had particularly pleased me in a friend's letter repeated word for word to another—Farewell once more.

NOTE

[I have no idea why this charming letter was held back when Talfourd copied the Lamb-Wordsworth correspondence. I am very glad to be able to print it now. The name of the young man who showed the Lambs such courtesy is not known.

Coleridge's literary plans were destined to change. The *Biographia Literaria* was published alone in 1817, and *Sibylline Leaves* alone later in the same year.—"Remorse" had been acted at Calne in June for the second time, a previous visit having been paid in 1813. Coleridge gave the manager a "flaming testimonial." —Lady Beaumont was the wife of Sir George Beaumont (see page 405).

"Oliver Cromwell." The portrait by Cooper at Sidney Sussex College.

Marmaduke Franklin was with Lamb at Christ's Hospital. Afterwards he became Master of the Blue Coat School at Hertford. He is mentioned in the *Elia* essay on Christ's Hospital.]

LETTER 212

MARY LAMB TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date. ? Late summer, 1815.]

MY dear Miss Betham,—My brother and myself return you a thousand thanks for your kind communication. We have read your poem many times over with increased interest, and very

much wish to see you to tell you how highly we have been pleased with it. May we beg one favour?—I keep the manuscript in the hope that you will grant it. It is that, either now or when the whole poem is completed, you will read it over with us. When I say with *us*, of course I mean Charles. I know that you have many judicious friends, but I have so often known my brother spy out errors in a manuscript which has passed through many judicious hands, that I shall not be easy if you do not permit him to look yours carefully through with you; and also you *must* allow him to correct the press for you.

If I knew where to find you I would call upon you. Should you feel nervous at the idea of meeting Charles in the capacity of a *severe censor*, give me a line, and I will come to you any where, and convince you in five minutes that he is even timid, stammers, and can scarcely speak for modesty and fear of giving pain when he finds himself placed in that kind of office. Shall I appoint a time to see you here when he is from home? I will send him out any time you will name; indeed, I am always naturally alone till four o'clock. If you are nervous about coming, remember I am equally so about the liberty I have taken, and shall be till we meet and laugh off our mutual fears.

Yours most affectionately
M. Lamb.

Note

[The letter refers again to *The Lay of Marie*.

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Matilda Betham (franked by John Rickman, September 13, 1815), not available for this edition, in which Lamb apologises for delay in revising Miss Betham's *Lay of Marie*. Mary Matilda Betham, whom we have already met, had written a very charming poem on the subject of Marie, a poetess who figured among the Anglo-Norman *trouveurs* of the thirteenth century. Both Lamb and Southey helped her with counsel. The poem was published in 1816.

In another undated letter on the same subject (printed by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in *The Lambs*) Lamb expresses his willingness to finish the proofs of *The Lay of Marie* (he calls it just "Mary"), but says he cannot undertake anything else. Apparently he found the task impossible, and Mary Lamb had just been taken ill again. The next letter, which is undated, refers to the same matter.]

LETTER 213

CHARLES LAMB TO MATILDA BETHAM

D[R] Miss Betham,—All this while I have been tormenting myself with the thought of having been ungracious to you, and you have been all the while accusing yourself. Let us absolve one another & be quits. My head is in such a state from incapacity for business that I certainly know it to be my duty not to undertake the veriest trifle in addition. I hardly know how I can go on. I have tried to get some redress by explaining my health, but with no great success. No one can tell how ill I am, because it does not come out to the exterior of my face, but lies in my scull deep & invisible. I wish I was leprous & black jaundiced skin-over, and [?or] that all was as well within as my cursed looks. You must not think me worse than I am. I am determined not to be overset, but to give up business rather and get 'em to allow me a trifle for services past. O that I had been a shoe-maker or a baker, or a man of large independ[t] fortune. O darling Laziness! heaven of Epicurus! Saints Everlasting Rest! that I could drink vast potations of thee thro' unmeasured Eternity. Otium *cum* vel *sine* dignitate. Scandalous, dishonerable, any-kind-of-*repose*. I stand not upon the *dignified sort*. Accursed damned desks, trade, commerce, business—Inventions of that old original busy-body brainworking Satan, sabbathless restless Satan—

A curse relieves. Do you ever try it?

A strange Letter this to write to a Lady, but mere honey'd sentences will not distill. I dare not ask who revises in my stead. I have drawn you into a scrape. I am ashamed, but I know no remedy. My unwellness must be my apology. God bless you (tho' he curse the India House & fire it to the ground) and may no unkind Error creep into Marie, may all its readers like it as well as I do & everybody about you like its kind author no worse. Why the devil am I never to have a chance of scribbling my own free thoughts, verse or prose, again? Why must I write of Tea & Drugs & Price Goods & bales of Indigo—farewell.

C. LAMB.

[*Written at head of Letter on margin the following*:—]

Mary goes to her Place on Sunday—I mean your maid, foolish Mary. She wants a very little brains only to be an excellent Serv. She is excellently calculated for the country, where nobody has brains.

NOTE

[In the passage concerning work and leisure we see another hint of the sonnet (printed on page 646) which Lamb was to write a little later.

"*Otium cum vel* . . ."—"Ease either with or without dignity."

Here should come two notes to William Ayrton, printed by Mr. Macdonald, referring to the musical use of the word "air."]

LETTER 214

CHARLES LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

Thursday 19 Oct. 1815.

My brother is gone to Paris.

DEAR Miss H.—I am forced to be the replier to your Letter, for Mary has been ill and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favorable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six month's interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise; by God's blessing in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable, we are strong for the time as rocks, the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs. Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla, I feel I hardly feel enough for him, my own calamities press about me and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can, and all the kindness I can towards you all. God bless you. I hear nothing from Coleridge.

Yours truly C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Mary Lamb had recovered from her preceding attack in February. She did not recover from the present illness until December.

"The wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs." "'But God tempers the wind,' said Maria, 'to the shorn lamb'" (Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*). Also in Henri Estienne (1594).

"Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla." Priscilla Wordsworth (*née* Lloyd) died this month, aged thirty-three. Charles Lloyd having just completed his translation of the tragedies of Alfieri, published in 1815, had been prostrated by the most serious visitation of his malady that he had yet suffered.]

LETTER 215

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 25th, 1815.

DEAR old friend and absentee,—This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?—'tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of *unto us a child;* faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery—I feel.

I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo—and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years—she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance; it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's Church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither,—and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a —— or a ——. For aught I see you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss Hayes, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the "Wanderings of Cain," in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism and metaphysics, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you

have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends — benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crisp, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington-street, and for aught I know, resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely; but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can. C. Lamb.

Note

[Since Lamb's last letter Manning had entered Lhassa, the sacred city of Thibet, being the first Englishman to do so. He remained there until April, 1812, when he returned to Calcutta. Then he took up his abode once more in Canton, and, in 1816, moved to Peking as interpreter to Lord Amherst's embassy, returning to England the following year.

"Norfolcian." Manning was a Norfolk man.

"Struldbug." In *Gulliver's Travels*. The Struldbrugs who lived in Luggnagg and never died.

"Maclaurin." Here Lamb surprises the reader by a reasonable remark. Colin Maclaurin, the mathematician, was the author of *A Treatise of Fluxions*.

Coleridge actually had begun many years before an epic on the subject of the "Wanderings of Cain" (see note on page 173).]

LETTER 216

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 26th, 1815.

DEAR Manning,—Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full

of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy; it sets the brain agoing; but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends, then, are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing—but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. Kenney (ci-devant Holcroft) never let her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in (as the false nuncio asserts), but to make up spick and span into a new bran gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla, wife of Kit Wordsworth! Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his damn'd eye upon us, and is w[h]etting his infernal feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, "The good man at the hour of death." I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these latter may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long. But it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans. And yet I know when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fire-side just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead, that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's, but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless

stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

God bless you.—Your old friend, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Robert Lloyd had died in 1811, and within a few days one of his brothers and one of his sisters.

"The good man at the hour of death." I have not found the picture to which Lamb refers. Probably a popular print of the day, or he may have been incorrectly remembering Blake's "Death of the Good Old Man" in Blair's *Grave*.

Manning, by changing his plans, did not reach St. Helena when he expected to; not, indeed, until July, 1817, when he met Napoleon.]

LETTER 217

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: April 9, 1816.]

DEAR Wordsworth—Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the Books you mean to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets and Ode according to your Suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till People have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain, and chain them to my shelves More Bodleiano, and People may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow, some mean to read but don't read, and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money, they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Cov. Gard. Manager has declined accepting his Tragedy, tho' (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, tho' it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O Neil or a Mr. Kean. However he is going to day to write to Lord

Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive Poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature by instinct to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chemist's Laboratory in Norfolk Street. She might as well have sent a Helluo Librorum for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls. He has done pretty well as yet.

Tell Miss H. my Sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind Letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time, God bless him.

Tell Mrs. W. her Postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. "Likelihood" for instance is thus typified [*here Lamb makes an illegible scribble*].

I should not wonder if the constant making out of such Paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s Eyes as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy I hear has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress in corresponding lucidness upon our outward eyesight.

Mary's Love to all, She is quite well.

I am call'd off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool—but why do I relate this to you who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of Deposits, of Interest, of Warehouse rent, and Contingent Fund—Adieu. C. LAMB.

A longer Letter when C. is gone back into the Country, relating his success, &c.—*my* judgment of *your* new Books &c. &c.—I am scarce quiet enough while he stays.

Yours again

C. L.

Tuesday 9 Apr. 1816.

NOTE

[Wordsworth had sent Lamb, presumably in proof (see next letter), *Thanksgiving Ode, 18 Jan. 1816, with other short pieces chiefly referring to recent events*, 1816—the subject of the ode being the peace that had come upon Europe with the downfall of Napoleon. It follows in the collected works the sonnets to liberty.

"*More Bodleiano.*" According to Macray's *Annals of the Bodleian Library* (second edition, 1890, page 121), books seem

to have been chained in the Bodleian Library up to 1751. The process of removing the chains seems to have begun in 1757. In 1761 as many as 1,448 books were unchained at a cost of a ½d. a piece. A dozen years later discarded chains were sold at the rate of 2d. for a long chain, 1½d. for a short one, and if one hankered after a hundred-weight of them, the wish could be gratified on payment of 14s. Many loose chains are still preserved in the library as relics.

"For of those who borrow." Lamb's *Elia* essay, "The Two Races of Men," may have had its germ in this passage.

Coleridge came to London from Calne in March bringing with him the manuscript of "Zapolya." He had already had correspondence with Lord Byron concerning a tragedy for Drury Lane, on whose committee Byron had a seat, but he had done nothing towards writing it. "Zapolya" was never acted. It was published in 1817. Coleridge's lodgings were at 43 Norfolk Street, Strand. See next letter for further news of Coleridge at this time.

"A *Helluo Librorum*"—a book-glutton.

Lycophron, the Greek poet and grammarian, called "Tenebrosus," on account of the obscurity of his poem *Cassandra*.]

LETTER 218

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[April 26, 1816.]

SIR,

PLEASE to state the Weights and Amounts of the following Lots of
sold Sale, 181 for

Your obedient Servant,
CHAS. LAMB.

Accountant's Office,
26 Apr. 1816

DEAR W. I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the Revise of the Poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the Printer not to neglect the Correction. I know how such a blunder would "batter at your Peace." [*Batter is written batten and corrected to batter in the*

margin.] With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted, called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve; Iz. Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. "Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence" is exquisite. The Poems I endeavored not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded. (Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say.) As if I were to luxuriate tomorrow at some Picture Gallery I was never at before, and going by to day by chance, found the door open, had but 5 minutes to look about me, peeped in, just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained, —not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing Xtabel, by L[d] Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, Kubla Khan—which said vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it, but there is an observation "Never tell thy dreams," and I am almost afraid that Kubla Khan is an owl that won't bear day light, I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters, no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young I used to chant with extacy *Mild Arcadians ever blooming*, till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and think it better than Windsor Forest, Dying Xtian's address &c.—C. has sent his Tragedy to D. L. T.—it cannot be acted this season, and by their manner of receiving it, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is at present under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman (Killman?) a Highgate Apothecary, where he plays at leaving off Laud—m. I think his essentials not touched: he is very bad, but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face when he repeats his verses hath its ancient glory, an Archangel a little damaged.

Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at length to her kind Letter? We are not quiet enough. Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but 4 miles, and the neighborhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of 50 ordinary Persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius, for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *author of the Excursion*, I should in a very little time lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material*; there is not as much metaphysics in 36 of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's

treatise on the Human understanding, or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the Pleasures of Hope or more natural Beggar's Petition. I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now within 4 lines I was call'd off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete Errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the Chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

N.B. Nothing said above to the contrary but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any, but I pay dearer, what amuses others robs me of myself, my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work, it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances; it takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump from ten to four, but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head akes and you have had enough. God bless you. C. Lamb.

Note

[Lamb had been correcting the proofs of Wordsworth's *Letter to a Friend of Burns* and his *Thanksgiving Ode, with other short Pieces*, both published in 1816. In the *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, which was called forth by the intended republication of Burns' life by Dr. Currie, Wordsworth incidentally compares Burns and Cotton. The phrase which Lamb commends is in the description of "Tam o' Shanter" (page 22)—"This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality. . . ."

"Batter at your peace." "Macbeth," IV., 3, 178.

Coleridge's *Christabel* (with *Kubla Khan* and *The Pains of Sleep*) was published by Murray in 1816. It ran into a second edition quickly, but was not too well received. The *Edinburgh* indeed described it as destitute of one ray of genius. In a letter from Fanny Godwin to Mary Shelley, July 20, 1816, in Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, we read that "Lamb says *Christabel* ought never to have been published; and that no one understood it, and *Kubla Khan* is nonsense." But this was probably idle gossip. Lamb had admired *Christabel* to the full, but he may have thought its publication in an incomplete state an error.

"Mild Arcadians ever blooming." In Pope's "Song by a Person of Quality."

Coleridge was introduced to Mr. James Gillman of the Grove, Highgate, by Dr. Adams of Hatton Garden, to whom he had applied for medical aid. Adams suggested that Gillman should take Coleridge into his house. Gillman arranged on April 11 that Adams should bring Coleridge on the following day. Coleridge went alone and conquered. He promised to begin domestication on the next day, and "I looked with impatience," wrote Gillman in his *Life of Coleridge*, "for the morrow . . . I felt indeed almost spellbound, without the desire of release." Coleridge did not come on the morrow, but two days later. He remained with the Gillmans for the rest of his life.

The Pleasures of Hope, by Thomas Campbell; *The Beggar's Petition*—"Pity the sorrows of a poor old man"—by Thomas Moss (1740-1808), a ditty in all the recitation books. Lamb alluded to it in the *London Magazine* version of his *Elia* essay, "A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars."

Here should come a brief note from Lamb to Leigh Hunt, dated May 13, 1816, not available for this edition (printed in *The Lambs*), accompanying *Falstaff's Letters*, etc., and a gift of "John Woodvil." This is Lamb's first letter to James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) that has been preserved. He had known Hunt (an old Christ's Hospitaller, but later than Lamb's day) for some years. To his *Reflector* he contributed a number of essays and humorous letters in 1810-1811; and he had written also for *The Examiner* in 1812 and during Hunt's imprisonment in 1813-1815. The Lambs visited him regularly at the Surrey Jail. One of Lamb's most charming poems is inscribed "To T. L. H."—Thornton Leigh Hunt, whom he called his "favourite child."]

LETTER 219

CHARLES LAMB TO MATILDA BETHAM

[Dated at end: June 1, 1816.]

DEAR Miss Betham,—I have sent your *very pretty lines* to Southey in a frank as you requested. Poor S. what a grievous loss he must have had! Mary and I rejoice in the prospect of seeing you soon in town. Let *us* be among the very first persons you come to see. Believe me that you can have no friends who respect and love you more than ourselves. Pray present our

kind remembrances to Barbara, and to all to whom you may think they will be acceptable.

Yours very sincerely,
C. LAMB.

Have you seen *Christabel* since its publication?
E. I. H. June 1 1816.

NOTE

[Southey's eldest son, Herbert, had died in April of this year.
Here should come a letter from Lamb to H. Dodwell, of the India House, dated August, 1816, not available for this edition. Lamb writes from Calne, in Wiltshire, where he and his sister were making holiday, staying with the Morgans. He states that he has lost all sense of time, and recollected that he must return to work some day only through the accident of playing *Commerce* instead of whist.]

LETTER 220

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. September 23, 1816.]

MY dear Wordsworth, It seems an age since we have corresponded, but indeed the interim has been stuffd out with more variety than usually checquers my same-seeming existence.—Mercy on me, what a traveller have I been since I wrote you last! what foreign wonders have been explored! I have seen Bath, King Bladud's ancient well, fair Bristol, seed-plot of suicidal Chatterton, Marlbro', Chippenham, Calne, famous for nothing in particular that I know of—but such a vertigo of locomotion has not seized us for years. We spent a month with the Morgans at the last named Borough—August—and such a change has the change wrought in us that we could not stomach wholesome Temple air, but are absolutely rusticating (O the gentility of it) at Dalston, about one mischievous boy's stone's throw off Kingsland Turnpike, one mile from Shoreditch church,—thence we emanate in various directions to Hackney, Clapton, Totnam, and such like romantic country. That my lungs should ever prove so dainty as to fancy they perceive differences of air! but so it is, tho' I am almost ashamed of it, like Milton's devil (turn'd truant to his old Brimstone) I am purging off the foul air of my once darling

tobacco in this Eden, absolutely snuffing up pure gales, like old worn out Sin playing at being innocent, which never comes again, for in spite of good books and good thoughts there is something in a Pipe that virtue cannot give tho' she give her unendowed person for a dowry. Have you read the review of Coleridge's character, person, physiognomy &c. in the Examiner—his features even to his *nose*—O horrible license beyond the old Comedy. He is himself gone to the sea side with his favorite Apothecary, having left for publication as I hear a prodigious mass of composition for a Sermon to the middling ranks of people to persuade them they are not so distressed as is commonly supposed. Methinks he should recite it to a congregation of Bilston Colliers,—the fate of Cinna the Poet would instantaneously be his. God bless him, but certain that rogue-Examiner has beset him in most unmannerly strains. Yet there is a kind of respect shines thro' the disrespect that to those who know the rare compound (that is the subject of it) almost balances the reproof, but then those who know him but partially or at a distance are so extremely apt to drop the qualifying part thro' their fingers. The "after all, Mr. Wordsworth is a man of great talents, if he did not abuse them" comes so dim upon the eyes of an Edinbro' review reader, that have been gloating-open chuckle-wide upon the preceding detail of abuses, it scarce strikes the pupil with any consciousness of the letters being there, like letters writ in lemon. There was a cut at me a few months back by the same hand, but my agnomen or agni-nomen not being calculated to strike the popular ear, it dropt anonymous, but it was a pretty compendium of observation, which the author has collected in my disparagement, from some hundreds of social evenings which we had spent together,—however in spite of all, there is something tough in my attachment to H—— which these violent strainings cannot quite dislocate or sever asunder. I get no conversation in London that is absolutely worth attending to but his. There is monstrous little sense in the world, or I am monstrous clever, or squeamish or something, but there is nobody to talk to—to talk *with* I should say—and to go talking to one's self all day long is too much of a good thing, besides subjecting one to the imputation of being out of one's senses, which does no good to one's temporal interest at all. By the way, I have seen Colerge. but once this 3 or 4 months. He is an odd person, when he first comes to town he is quite hot upon visiting, and then he turns off and absolutely never comes at all, but seems to forget there are any such people in the world. I made one attempt to visit him (a morning call) at Highgate, but there was something in him or his apothecary which I found so unattractively-repulsing-from any temptation to call again, that I stay away as naturally

as a Lover visits. The rogue gives you Love Powders, and then a strong horse drench to bring 'em off your stomach that they mayn't hurt you. I was very sorry the printing of your Letter was not quite to your mind, but I surely did not think but you had arranged the manner of breaking the paragraphs from some principle known to your own mind, and for some of the Errors, I am confident that Note of Admiration in the middle of two words did not stand so when I had it, it must have dropt out and been replaced wrong, so odious a blotch could not have escaped me. Gifford (whom God curse) has persuaded squinting Murray (whom may God not bless) not to accede to an offer Field made for me to print 2 vols. of Essays, to include the one on Hog^rth. and 1 or 2 more, but most of the matter to be new, but I dare say I should never have found time to make them; M. would have had 'em, but shewed specimens from the Reflector to G——, as he acknowleged to Field, and Crispin did for me. "Not on his soal but on his soul, damn'd Jew" may the malediction of my eternal antipathy light—We desire much to hear from you, and of you all, including Miss Hutchinson, for not writing to whom Mary feels a weekly (and did for a long time feel a daily) Pang. How is Southey?—I hope his pen will continue to move many years smoothly and continuously for all the rubs of the rogue Examiner. A pertinacious foul-mouthed villain it is!

This is written for a rarity at the seat of business: it is but little time I can generally command from secular calligraphy,—the pen seems to know as much and makes letters like figures—an obstinate clerkish thing. It shall make a couplet in spite of its nib before I have done with it,

"and so I end
Commending me to your love, my dearest friend."

from Leaden Hall, Septem^r something, 1816

C. Lamb.

Note

[The Lambs had taken summer lodgings—at 14 Kingsland Row, Dalston—which they retained for some years: but this is not quite certain (see Letter 244 and note, page 540).

Hazlitt's article on Coleridge was in *The Examiner* for September 8. Among other things Hazlitt said: "Mr. Shandy would have settled the question at once: 'You have little or no nose, Sir.'"

One passage in the article gives colour to the theory that Hazlitt occasionally borrowed from Lamb's conversation. In Lamb's letter to Wordsworth of April 20, 1816, he has the celebrated description of Coleridge, "an archangel a little damaged." Hazlitt in this

article writes: "If he had had but common moral principle, that is, sincerity, he would have been a great man; nor hardly, as it is, appears to us—

> 'Less than arch-angel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscur'd.'"

Hazlitt may have heard Lambs' epithet, backed probably by the same passage from *Paradise Lost*.

Crabb Robinson tells us, in his *Diary*, that Coleridge was less hurt by the article than he anticipated. "He denies H., however, originality, and ascribes to L. [Lamb] the best ideas in H.'s articles. He was not displeased to hear of his being knocked down by John Lamb lately."

Coleridge's new work was *The Statesman's Manual; or, the Bible the best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight: A Lay Sermon*, 1816. It had been first announced as "A Lay Sermon on the Distresses of the Country, addressed to the Middle and Higher Orders," and Hazlitt's article had been in the nature of an anticipatory review.

I do not find anywhere the "cut" at Lamb from Hazlitt's hand, or indeed any one's hand, to which Lamb refers. Hazlitt at this time was living at No. 19 York Street, Westminster, in Milton's old house.

"Agni-nomen." From *agnus*, a lamb.

"The fate of Cinna." Cinna the poet, mistaken for the oppressor, was torn to pieces by the populace. See "Julius Cæsar," III., 3.

"After all, Mr. Wordsworth . . ."—the *Edinburgh Review* article on *The Excursion*, in November, 1814, beginning, "This will never do," had at least two lapses into fairness: "But the truth is, that Mr. Wordsworth, with all his perversities, is a person of great powers"; and "Nobody can be more disposed to do justice to the great powers of Mr. Wordsworth than we are."

"The rogue gives you Love Powders." See note on page 164.

"The printing of your Letter." *The Letter to a Friend of Burns* (see above).

"2 vols. of Essays." These were printed with poems as *The Works of Charles Lamb* by the Olliers in 1818 (see page 515).

"Crispin"—Gifford (see note on page 453).

"Not on his soal [sole] but on his soul"—"Merchant of Venice," IV., 1, 123—"Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew."

"Southey." Hazlitt's attacks on the Laureate were continuous.]

LETTER 221

MARY LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

[No date. Middle of November, 1816.]
Inner Temple.

[*Charles Lamb adds at the head:*—]

Mary has barely left me room to say How d'ye. I have received back the Examiner containing the delicate enquiry into certain infirm parts of S. T. C.'s character. What is the general opinion of it? Farewell. My love to all. C. LAMB.

MY dear friend, I have procured a frank for this day, and having been hindered all the morning have no time left to frame excuses for my long and inexcusable silence, and can only thank you for the very kind way in which you overlook it. I should certainly have written on the receipt of yours but I had not a frank, and also I wished to date my letter from my own home where you expressed so cordial a wish to hear we had arrived. We have passed ten, I may call them very good weeks, at Dalston, for they completely answered the purpose for which we went. Reckoning our happy month at Calne, we have had quite a rural summer, and have obtained a very clear idea of the great benefit of quiet—of early hours and time intirely at one's own disposal, and no small advantages these things are; but the return to old friends—the sight of old familiar faces round me has almost reconciled me to occasional headachs and fits of peevish weariness—even London streets, which I sometimes used to think it hard to be eternally doomed to walk through before I could see a green field, seem quite delightful.

Charles smoked but one pipe while we were at Dalston and he has not transgressed much since his return. I hope he will only smoke now with his fellow-smokers, which will give him five or six clear days in the week. Shame on me, I did not even write to thank you for the bacon, upon which, and some excellent eggs your sister added to her kind present, we had so many nice feasts. I have seen Henry Robinson, who speaks in raptures of the days he passed with you. He says he never saw a man so happy in *three wives* as Mr. Wordsworth is. I long to join you and make a fourth, and we cannot help talking of the possibility in some future fortunate summer of venturing to come so far, but we generally end in thinking the possibility impossible, for I dare not come but by post chaises, and the expence would be enormous, yet it was very pleasing to read

Mrs. Wordsworth's kind invitation and to feel a kind of latent hope of what might one day happen.

You ask how Coleridge maintains himself. I know no more than you do. Strange to say, I have seen him but once since he has been at Highgate, and then I met him in the street. I have just been reading your kind letter over again and find you had some doubt whether we had left the Temple entirely. It was merely a lodging we took to recruit our health and spirits. From the time we left Calne Charles drooped sadly, company became quite irksome, and his anxious desire to leave off smoking, and his utter inability to perform his daily resolutions against it, became quite a torment to him, so I prevailed with him to try the experiment of change of scene, and set out in one of the short stage coaches from Bishopsgate Street, Miss Brent and I, and we looked over all the little places within three miles and fixed on one quite countrified and not two miles from Shoreditch Church, and entered upon it the next day. I thought if we stayed but a week it would be a little rest and respite from our troubles, and we made a ten weeks stay, and very comfortable we were, so much so that if ever Charles is superannuated on a small pension, which is the great object of his ambition, and we felt our income straitened, I do think I could live in the country entirely—at least I thought so while I was there but since I have been at home I wish to live and die in the Temple where I was born. We left the trees so green it looked like early autumn, and can see but one leaf "The last of its clan" on our poor old Hare Court trees. What a rainy summer!—and yet I have been so much out of town and have made so much use of every fine day that I can hardly help thinking it has been a fine summer. We calculated we walked three hundred and fifty miles while we were in our country lodging. One thing I must tell you, Charles came round every morning to a shop near the Temple to get shaved. Last Sunday we had such a pleasant day, I must tell you of it. We went to Kew and saw the old Palace where the King was brought up, it was the pleasantest sight I ever saw, I can scarcely tell you why, but a charming old woman shewed it to us. She had lived twenty six years there and spoke with such a hearty love of our good old King, whom all the world seems to have forgotten, that it did me good to hear her. She was as proud in pointing out the plain furniture (and I am sure you are now sitting in a larger and better furnished room) of a small room in which the King always dined, nay more proud of the simplicity of her royal master's taste, than any shower of Carlton House can be in showing the fine things there, and so she was when she made us remark the smallness of one of the Princesses' bedrooms, and said she slept and also dressed in that little room. There are a great many good pictures but I was

most pleased with one of the King when he was about two years old, such a pretty little white-headed boy.

I cannot express how much pleasure a letter from you gives us. If I could promise my self I should be always as well as I am now, I would say I will be a better correspondent in future. If Charles has time to add a line I shall be less ashamed to send this hasty scrawl. Love to all and every one. How much I should like once more to see Miss Wordsworth's handwriting, if she would but write a postscript to your next, which I look to receive in a few days.

Yours affectionately

M. Lamb.

For a Postscript, see the beginning.

Note

["Miss Brent." Mrs. Morgan's sister.

Crabb Robinson had been in the Lake Country in September and October.

"The last of its clan." From Coleridge's *Christabel*, line 49.

"To a shop near the Temple." Possibly to Mr. A—— of Flower-de-Luce Court, mentioned by Lamb in the footnote to his essay "On the Melancholy of Tailors" (see Vol. I., page 174).

"Our good old King"—George III., then in retirement. Carlton House was the home of the Regent, whom Lamb (and probably his sister) detested—as his "Triumph of the Whale" and other squibs (see Vol. V.) show.

See Appendix II., page 973, for a letter to Rickman.]

LETTER 222

MARY LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

[No date. ? Late 1816.]

MY dear Miss Hutchinson, I had intended to write you a long letter, but as my frank is dated I must send it off with a bare acknowledgment of the receipt of your kind letter. One question I must hastily ask you. Do you think Mr. Wordsworth would have any reluctance to write (strongly recommending to their patronage) to any of his rich friends in London to solicit employment for Miss Betham as a Miniature Painter? If you give me hopes that he will not be averse to do this, I will write to you more fully stating the infinite good he would do by performing so irksome a task as I know asking favours to be. In brief, she has contracted debts for printing her beautiful poem of "Marie," which like all things of original excellence does not sell at all.

These debts have led to little accidents unbecoming a woman and a poetess to suffer. Retirement with such should be voluntary.

[*Charles Lamb adds:*—]

The Bell rings. I just snatch the Pen out of my sister's hand to finish rapidly. Wordswth. may tell De Q that Miss B's price for a Virgin and Child is three guineas.

Yours (all of you) ever

C. L.

NOTE

["De Q"—Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859), the "opium-eater," then living at Grasmere. Lamb and De Quincey had first met in 1804; but it was not until 1821 that they became really intimate, when Lamb introduced him to the *London Magazine*.

Miss Betham painted miniature portraits, among others, of Mrs. S. T. Coleridge and Sara Coleridge.

Here should come a note to William Ayrton dated April 18, 1817, not available for this edition, thanking him for much pleasure at "Don Giovanni" (see note to next letter).

Somewhen in 1816 should come a letter from Lamb to Leigh Hunt on the publication of *The Story of Rimini*, mentioned in *Leigh Hunt's Correspondence*, of which this is the only sentence that is preserved: "The third Canto is in particular my favourite: we congratulate you most sincerely on the trait [? taste] of your prison fruit."]

LETTER 223

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM AYRTON

EPISTLE

TO WILLM. AYRTON ESQRE.

Temple, May 12, 1817.

MY dear friend,
Before I end,—
Have you any
More orders for Don Giovanni
To give
Him that doth live
Your faithful Zany?

Without raillery
I mean Gallery
Ones:
For I am a person that shuns
All ostentation
And being at the top of the fashion;
And seldom go to operas
But in formâ pauperis.

I go to the play
In a very economical sort of a way,
Rather to see
Than be seen.
Though I'm no ill sight
Neither,
By candle-light,
And in some kinds of weather.
You might pit me
For height
Against Kean;
But in a grand tragic scene
I'm nothing:—
It would create a kind of loathing
To see me act Hamlet;
There'd be many a damn let
Fly
At my presumption
If I should try,
Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way, tell me candidly how you relish
This, which they call
The lapidary style?
Opinions vary.
The late Mr. Mellish
Could never abide it.
He thought it vile,
And coxcombical.
My friend the Poet Laureat,
Who is a great lawyer at
Anything comical,
Was the first who tried it;
But Mellish could never abide it.
But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.

For who can confute
A body that's mute?—
Or who would fight
With a senseless sprite?—
Or think of troubling
An impenetrable old goblin
That's dead and gone,
And stiff as stone,
To convince him with arguments pro and con,
As if some live logician,
Bred up at Merton,
Or Mr. Hazlitt, the Metaphysician—
Hey, Mr Ayrton!
With all your rare tone.

For tell me how should an apparition
List to your call,
Though you talk'd for ever,—
Ever so clever,
When his ear itself,
By which he must hear, or not hear at all,
Is laid on the shelf?
Or put the case
(For more grace)
It were a female spectre—
Now could you expect her
To take much gust
In long speeches,
With her tongue as dry as dust,
In a sandy place,
Where no peaches,
Nor lemons, nor limes, nor oranges hang,
To drop on the drougth of an arid harangue,
Or quench,
With their sweet drench,
The fiery pangs which the worms inflict,
With their endless nibblings,
Like quibblings,
Which the corpse may dislike, but can ne'er contradict—
Hey, Mr. Ayrton?
With all your rare tone—
I am.
C. Lamb.

NOTE

[The text is from Ayrton's transcript in a private volume lately in the possession of Mr. Edward Ayrton, lettered, *Lamb's Works*, Vol. III., uniform with the 1818 edition.

William Ayrton (1777-1858), a friend and neighbour of the Burneys, and a member of Lamb's whist-playing set, was a musical critic, and at this time director of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, where he had just produced Mozart's "Don Giovanni." His wife was Marianne Arnold, sister of Samuel James Arnold, manager of the Lyceum Theatre.

"You might pit me for height against Kean." This was so. Edmund Kean was small in stature, though not so "immaterially" built as Lamb is said to have been.

"Mr. Mellish." Possibly the Joseph Charles Mellish who translated Schiller.

The Laureate, Southey, had first tried the lapidary style in "Gooseberry Pie"; later, without rhymes, in "Thalaba."

Some time in the intervening three months before the next letter the Lambs went to Brighton for their holiday.]

LETTER 224

CHARLES LAMB TO BARRON FIELD

Aug. 31st, 1817.

MY dear Barron,—The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine, of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the "Statesman"—a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing?

Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakespear's, I suppose—not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain "small deer."

Have you poets among you? Cursed plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one:—

> "So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself
> Scarce seemeth there to be."

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. A[lsager] is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (videlicet, little or nothing,) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, viz., Sunday 31st August, 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb., 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now; and again, your then is not my then; but my now may be your then, and *vice versâ*. Whose head is competent to these things?

How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet; but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere.

C. L.

NOTE

[This is Lamb's first letter that has been preserved to Barron Field. Barron Field (1786-1846) was a lawyer, a son of Henry Field, apothecary to Christ's Hospital, and brother of a fellow clerk of Lamb's in the India House. He had also been a contributor to Leigh Hunt's *Reflector* in 1810-1812. Field was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, whither he sailed in 1816, reaching Sydney in February, 1817. His wife was a Miss Jane Carncroft.

This letter forms the groundwork of Lamb's *Elia* essay on "Distant Correspondents" (see Vol. II., page 104), which may be read with it as an example of the difference in richness between Lamb's epistolary and finished literary style.

"Small deer"—"Mice and rats, and such small deer" ("King Lear," III., 4, 144)—an allusion to Shakespeare's deer-stealing episode.

"Lord Bacon's problem." Bacon discusses Atheists in more than one place; but I do not find this problem stated.

"So thievish 'tis . . ." A perversion of Coleridge's lines, in *The Ancient Mariner*:—

> So lonely 'twas, that God himself
> Scarce seemed there to be.

"Poor Mitchell's death." This may have been one of the lies referred to a little lower. If so, Thomas Mitchell (1783-1845) was probably intended, as he had been at Christ's Hospital, and was a friend of Leigh Hunt's, and might thus have known Lamb and Field. He translated Aristophanes. The only Mitchell of any importance who died in 1817 was Colonel Mitchell, who commanded a brigade at Waterloo; but Lamb would hardly know anything of him.

George Dyer, who had been tutor in the family of the third Earl of Stanhope (Citizen Stanhope), was one of the ten executors to whom that peer's estate was left, after paying a few legacies. Among them was another of Lamb's acquaintances, Joseph Jekyll, mentioned in the *Elia* essay on the Old Benchers. Dyer repudiated the office, but the heir persuaded him to accept an annuity. Cassius (see "Julius Cæsar," I., 2, 194) had "a lean and hungry look."

Thomas Barnes (1785-1841), another old Christ's Hospitaller, and a contributor to *The Reflector*, became editor of *The Times* in 1817. His projected journey was one of the "lies"; nor did Alsager, another *Times* man, whom we have already met, turn actor.]

LETTER 225

CHARLES LAMB TO JAMES AND LOUISA KENNEY

Londres, October, [1817].

DEAR Friends,—It is with infinite regret I inform you that the pleasing privilege of receiving letters, by which I have for these twenty years gratified my friends and abused the liberality of the Company trading to the Orient, is now at an end. A cruel edict of the Directors has swept it away altogether. The devil sweep away their patronage also. Rascals who think nothing of sponging upon their employers for their Venison and Turtle and Burgundy five days in a week, to the tune of five thousand pounds in a year, now find out that the profits of trade will not allow the innocent communication of thought between their underlings and their friends in distant provinces to proceed untaxed, thus withering up the heart of friendship and making the news of a friend's good health worse than indifferent, as tidings to be deprecated as bringing with it ungracious expenses. Adieu, gentle correspondence, kindly conveyance of soul, interchange of love, of opinions, of puns and what not! Henceforth a friend that does not stand in visible or palpable distance to me, is nothing to me. They have not left to the bosom of friendship even that cheap intercourse of sentiment the twopenny medium. The upshot is, you must not direct any more letters through me. To me you may annually, or biennially, transmit a brief account of your goings on [on] a single sheet, from which after I have deducted as much as the postage comes to, the remainder will be pure pleasure. But no more of those pretty commissions and counter commissions, orders and revoking of orders, obscure messages and obscurer explanations, by which the intellects of Marshall and Fanny used to be kept in a pleasing perplexity, at the moderate rate of six or seven shillings a week. In short, you must use me no longer as a go-between. Henceforth I write up NO THOROUGHFARE.

Well, and how far is Saint Valery from Paris; and do you get wine and walnuts tolerable; and the vintage, does it suffer from the wet? I take it, the wine of this season will be all wine and water; and have you any plays and green rooms, and Fanny Kellies to chat with of an evening; and is the air purer than the old gravel pits, and the bread so much whiter, as they say? Lord, what things you see that travel! I dare say the people are all French wherever you go. What an overwhelming effect that must have! I have stood one of 'em at a time, but two I generally found overpowering,

I used to cut and run; but, then, in their own vineyards may be they are endurable enough. They say marmosets in Senegambia are so pleasant as the day's long, jumping and chattering in the orange twigs; but transport 'em, one by one, over here into England, they turn into monkeys, some with tails, some without, and are obliged to be kept in cages.

I suppose you know we've left the Temple *pro tempore*. By the way, this conduct has caused strange surmises in a good lady of our acquaintance. She lately sent for a young gentleman of the India House, who lives opposite her, at Monroe's, the flute shop in Skinner Street, Snow Hill,—I mention no name, you shall never get out of me what lady I mean,—on purpose to ask all he knew about us. I had previously introduced him to her whist-table. Her inquiries embraced every possible thing that could be known of me, how I stood in the India house, what was the amount of my salary, what it was likely to be hereafter, whether I was thought to be clever in business, why I had taken country lodgings, why at Kingsland in particular, had I friends in that road, was anybody expected to visit me, did I wish for visitors, would an unexpected call be gratifying or not, would it be better if she sent beforehand, did anybody come to see me, wasn't there a gentleman of the name of Morgan, did he know him, didn't he come to see me, did he know how Mr. Morgan lived, she never could make out how they were maintained, was it true that he lived out of the profits of a linendraper's shop in Bishopsgate Street (there she was a little right, and a little wrong—M. is a gentleman tobacconist); in short, she multiplied demands upon him till my friend, who is neither over-modest nor nervous, declared he quite shuddered. After laying as bare to her curiosity as an anatomy he trembled to think what she would ask next. My pursuits, inclinations, aversions, attachments (some, my dear friends, of a most delicate nature), she lugged 'em out of him, or would, had he been privy to them, as you pluck a horse-bean from its iron stem, not as such tender rosebuds should be pulled. The fact is I am come to Kingsland, and that is the real truth of the matter, and nobody but yourselves should have extorted such a confession from me. I suppose you have seen by the Papers that Manning is arrived in England. He expressed some mortifications at not finding Mrs. Kenney in England. He looks a good deal sunburnt, and is got a little reserved, but I hope it will wear off. You will see by the Papers also that Dawe is knighted. He has been painting the Princess of Coborg and her husband. This is all the news I could think of. Write *to* us, but not *by* us, for I have near ten correspondents of this latter description, and one or other comes pouring in every day, till my purse strings and heart strings crack. Bad habits are not broken at once. I

am sure you will excuse the apparent indelicacy of mentioning this, but dear is my shirt, but dearer is my skin, and it's too late when the steed is stole, to shut the door.—Well, and does Louisa grow a fine girl, is she likely to have her mother's complexion, and does Tom polish in French air—Henry I mean—and Kenney is not so fidgety, and YOU sit down sometimes for a quiet half-hour or so, and all is comfortable, no bills (that you call writs) nor anything else (that you are equally sure to miscall) to annoy you? Vive la gaite de cœur et la bell pastime, vive la beau France et revive ma cher Empreur. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[James Kenney and his wife were now living at St. Valery. Marshall was Godwin's old friend, whom we have already seen, and Fanny was Fanny Holcroft.

Lamb's friend Fanny Kelly is first mentioned by Lamb in this letter. Frances Maria Kelly (1790-1882), to give her her full name, was then playing at the Lyceum. We shall soon see much of her.

"We've left the Temple *pro tempore*"—referring to the Dalston lodgings.

"What lady I mean." Mrs. Godwin lived in Skinner Street.

Manning, on his return from China, was wrecked near Sunda on February 17, 1817. The passengers were taken to St. Helena, and he did not reach England until the summer. This must give us the date of the present letter, previously attributed to October, 1816.

George Dawe was not knighted. Probably it was rumoured that he was to be. His portrait of Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Coburg (who died in 1817 so soon after her marriage) was very popular.

Louisa would be, I suppose, Louisa Holcroft. There was a Tom Holcroft, in whom later Lamb took some interest.]

LETTER 226

MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. November 21, 1817.]

MY dear Miss Wordsworth, Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure,—the sight of your hand writing was a most welcome surprize to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by yourself. You have quite the

advantage in volunteering a letter. There is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so at last we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place that so long had sheltered us—and here we are, living at a Brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle, Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least—strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window and listening to the calling up of the carriages and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon, I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a chearful place or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount with all its inhabitants enclosed were to be transplanted with her and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden. I passed through the street lately where Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth lodged; several fine new houses, which were then just rising out of the ground, are quite finished and a noble entrance made that way into Portland Place.

I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey—what a blunder the poor man made when he took up his dwelling among the mountains. I long to see my friend Py pos. Coleridge is still at Little Hampton with Mrs. Gillman, he has been so ill as to be confined to his room almost the whole time he has been there.

Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book, they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them all together and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles I am reconciled to the lossof them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting rooms, I missed my old friends and could not be comforted—then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton last summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book. I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. Morgan, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the

very last, while Charles and I played truant and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery. Certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of—for like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail. You say you can walk fifteen miles with ease, —that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. Morgan could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

I am ever yours most affectionately M. LAMB.

LETTER 226 (*continued*)

CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

DEAR Miss Wordsworth, Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mold, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans like mandrakes pull'd up. We are in the individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres with all [*a few words cut away: Talfourd has "their noises. Covent Garden"*] dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinous, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four and twenty hours before she saw a Thief. She sits at the window working, and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life. It is a delicate subject, but is Mr. * * * really married? and has he found a gargle to his mind? O how funny he did talk to me about her, in terms of such mild quiet whispering speculative profligacy. But did the animalcule and she crawl over the rubric together, or did they not? Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favor of a princess dying. [*A line and signature cut away.*]

NOTE

[The Lambs' house in Russell Street is now (1904) a fruiterer's: it has been rebuilt. Russell Street, Covent Garden, in those days was divided into Great Russell Street (from the Market to Brydges Street, now Catherine Street) and Little Russell Street (from Brydges Street to Drury Lane). The brazier, or ironmonger, was Mr. Owen, Nos. 20 and 21.

The Wordsworths had moved to Rydal Mount in 1813.

"I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey." Probably a reference to one of the opium-eater's illnesses.

It was at Littlehampton that Coleridge met Henry Francis Cary, the translator of Dante, afterwards one of Lamb's friends.

"Spot I like best in all this great city." See Vol. I. of this edition, page 155, for a little essay by Lamb on places of residence in London.

"Mr. * * *." One can but conjecture as to these asterisks. De Quincey, who was very small, married at the close of 1816.

"A princess dying"—Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Coburg. She was buried, amid national lamentation, on November 19, 1817.]

LETTER 227

CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

The Garden of England,
December 10, 1817.

DEAR J. P. C.,—I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge; and I know that you and your family attended his lectures four or five years ago. He is in bad health and worse mind: and unless something is done to lighten his mind he will soon be reduced to his extremities; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can; but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life, but a new course of lectures on Shakspear and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one); but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on India and India-pendence, to be completed at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many volumes foolscap folio. I am busy getting up my Hindoo mythology; and for the purpose I am once more enduring Southey's Curse. To be serious, Coleridge's state and affairs make me so; and there are particular reasons just now,

and have been any time for the last twenty years, why he should succeed. He will do so with a little encouragement. I have not seen him lately; and he does not know that I am writing.

Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The "Garden of England" of the address stands, of course, for Covent Garden.

This is the first letter to Collier that has been preserved. John Payne Collier (1789-1883), known as a Shakespearian critic and editor of old plays and poems, was then a reporter on *The Times*. He had recently married. Wordsworth also wrote to Collier on this subject. Coleridge's lectures were delivered in 1818, beginning on January 27, in Flower-de-Luce Court. Their preservation we owe to Collier's shorthand notes.

"My Hindoo mythology . . . Southey's Curse"—*The Curse of Kehama.*]

LETTER 228

CHARLES LAMB TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

December [26], 1817.

MY dear Haydon,—I will come with pleasure to 22, Lisson Grove North, at Rossi's, half-way up, right-hand side—if I can find it. Yours,

C. LAMB.

20, Russell Court, Covent Garden East.
half-way up, next the corner, left hand side.

NOTE

[The first letter that has been preserved to Haydon, the painter. Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846) was then principally known by his "Judgment of Solomon": he was at this time at work upon his most famous picture, "Christ's Entry into Jerusalem." Lamb's note is in acceptance of the invitation to the famous dinner which Haydon gave on December 28, 1817, to Wordsworth, Keats, Monkhouse and others, with the Comptroller of Stamps thrown in. Haydon's *Diary* describes the evening with much humour. See Appendix, page 954.]

LETTER 229

CHARLES LAMB TO MRS. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

18 feb. 1818. East India House.

(Mary shall send you all the *news*, which I find I have left out.)

MY dear Mrs. Wordsworth, I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of Commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of Goods, Cassia, Cardemoms, Aloes, Ginger, Tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections.

The reason why I cannot write letters at home is, that I am never alone. Plato's (I write to *W. W.* now) Plato's double animal parted never longed [? more] to be reciprocally reunited in the system of its first creation, than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his damn'd unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great Books, or compare sum with sum, and write PAID against this and UNP'D against t'other, and yet reserve in some "corner of my mind" some darling thoughts all my own—faint memory of some passage in a Book—or the tone of an absent friend's Voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing—a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face—The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's I mean), or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front—or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney—but there are a set of amateurs of the Belle Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rooks &c., what Coleridge said at the Lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use Reading can be to them but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egypt^{n}. hieroglyph as long as the Pyramids will last before they

should find it. These pests worrit me at business and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanys me home lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door, up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication, knock at the door, in comes Mrs. Hazlitt, or M. Burney, or Morgan, or Demogorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone, a Process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone!—eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange—for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine—wine can mollify stones. Then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters (God bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choaking and death-doing, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on if they go before bed time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner, but if you come, never go. The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often, but every time it comes by surprise that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening Company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth) and voices all the golden morning, and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company, but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one, to myself. I am never C. L. but always C. L. and Co.

He, who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself. I forget bed time, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be abed, just close to my bedroom window, is the club room of a public house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus-singers of the two theatres (it must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop or some cheap composer arranged for choruses, that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song,

nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. "That fury being quenchd"—the howl I mean—a curseder burden succeeds, of shouts and clapping and knocking of the table. At length over tasked nature drops under it and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of Dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christobel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke —"Every knell, the Baron saith, Wakes us up to a world of death," or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale is, that by my central situation I am a little over companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the Harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a chearful glass, but I mean merely to give you an idea between office confinement and after office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome and carried away leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favored with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect—or I should explain myself that instead of their return 220 times a year and the return of W. W. &c. 7 times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love and my poor name

CH. LAMB.

This to be read last.

W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H. but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or 2 since and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course, but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the Lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works which you could read so much better at leisure yourself; if delivered extempore, I am always in pain lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honor of me at the London Tavern. "Gentlemen" said I, and there I stoppt,—the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more

which never can be realized. Between us there is a great gulf—not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope (as there seemd to be between me and that Gentleman concern'd in the Stamp office that I so strangely coiled up from at Haydons). I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—Accountants, Deputy Accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather Poetical; but as SHE makes herself manifest by the persons of such Beasts, I loathe and detest her as the Scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red letter days, they had done their worst, but I was deceived in the length to which Heads of offices, those true Liberty haters, can go. They are the tyrants, not Ferdinand, nor Nero—by a decree past this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Blast them. I speak it soberly. Dear W. W., be thankful for your Liberty.

We have spent two very pleasant Evenings lately with Mr. Monkhouse.

NOTE

[Mary Lamb's letter of news either was not written or has not been preserved.

Lamb returned to the subject of this essay for his Popular Fallacy "That Home is Home" in 1826 (see Vol. II. of this edition, page 263). A little previously to that essay he had written an article in the *New Times* on unwelcome callers (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 270).

"Plato's double animal parted." A reference, I think, to the *Phædo*.

"Corner of my mind." I do not find this.

"Miss Burrell"—Fanny Burrell, afterwards Mrs. Gould. Lamb wrote in praise of her performance in "Don Giovanni in London" (see Vol. I. of this edition, page 372).

"Fanny Kelly's divine plain face." Only seventeen months later Lamb proposed to Miss Kelly.

"Lalla Rooks." Thomas Moore's poem *Lalla Rookh* was published in 1817.

"What Coleridge said." Coleridge was still lecturing on Shakespeare and poetry in Flower-de-Luce Court.

"Ante-Cadmeans." Cadmus is fabled as having introduced the use of letters into Greece.

"Morgan, or Demogorgon." Lamb was fond of the passage in *Paradise Lost* (II., 295), in which "the dreaded name of Demogorgon" sounds.

"Human faces (*divine* forsooth)."

> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.
> *Paradise Lost*, III., 44.

"The two theatres"—Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

"Bishop"—Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786-1855), composer of "Home, Sweet Home."

"That fury being quenchd."

> That fury stay'd,
> Quencht in a boggy Syrtis.
> *Paradise Lost*, II., 938-939.

"Mocks and mows." "Mop and mow," in "The Tempest," IV., 1, 47.

"Christabel's father."

> Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
> Knells us back to a world of death.
> Part II., lines 1 and 2.

"W. H. goes on lecturing." Hazlitt was delivering a course of lectures on the English poets at the Surrey Institution.

"'Gentlemen' said I." On another occasion Lamb, asked to give a toast, gave the best he knew—woodcock on toast. See also his toasts at Haydon's dinner. I do not know when or why the dinner was given to him; perhaps after the failure of "W. H."

"Gentleman concern'd in the Stamp office." See note to the preceding letter.

"Our red letter days." Lamb repeats the complaint in his *Elia* essay "Oxford in the Vacation." In 1820, I see from the Directory, the Accountant's Office, where Lamb had his desk, kept sacred only five red-letter days, where, ten years earlier, it had observed many.

"Mr. Monkhouse." Thomas Monkhouse, a friend of the Wordsworths and of Lamb. He was at Haydon's dinner.

Here should come a note from Lamb to Charles and James Ollier, dated May 28, 1818, not available for this edition (printed in *The Lambs*); which apparently accompanied final proofs of Lamb's *Works*. Lamb remarks, "There is a Sonnet to come in by way of dedication." This would be that to Martin Burney at the beginning of Vol. II. The *Works* were published in two volumes with a beautiful dedication to Coleridge (see Vol. V. of the present edition, page 1). Charles Ollier (1788-1859) was a friend of Leigh Hunt's, for whom he published, as well as for Shelley. He also brought out Keats' first volume. The Olliers' address was The Library, Vere Street, Oxford Street.]

LETTER 230

CHARLES LAMB TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER

[P.M. June 18, 1818.]

DEAR Sir (whichever opens it)
I am going off to Birmingh^m. I find my books, whatever faculty of selling they may have (I wish they had more for {your / my} sake), are admirably adapted for giving away. You have been bounteous. Six more and I shall have satisfied all just claims. Am I taking too great a liberty in begging you to send 4 as follows, and reserve 2 for me when I come home? That will make 31. Thirty-one times 12 is 372 shillings, Eighteen pounds twelve Shillings ! ! !—but here are my friends, to whom, if you *could* transmit them, as I shall be away a month, you will greatly

oblige the obliged
C. LAMB.

Mr. Ayrton, James Street, Buckingham Gate
Mr. Alsager, Suffolk Street East, Southwark, by Horsemonger Lane and in one parcel
directed to R. Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland
one for R. S.;
and one for W^m. Wordsworth, Esqr.

If you will be kind enough simply to write "from the Author" in all 4—you will still further etc.—

Either Longman or Murray is in the frequent habit of sending books to Southey and will take charge of the Parcel. It will be as well to write in at the beginning thus

R. Southey Esq. from the Author.
W. Wordsworth Esq. from the Author.

Then, if I can find the remaining 2, left for me at Russell S^t when I return, rather than encroach any more on the heap, I will engage to make no more new friends ad infinitum, YOURSELVES being the last.

Yours truly C. L.

I think Southey will give us a lift in that damn'd Quarterly. I meditate an attack upon that Cobler Gifford, which shall appear immediately after any favourable mention which S. may make in the Quarterly. It can't in decent *gratitude* appear *before*.

NOTE

[We know nothing of Lamb's visit to Birmingham. He is hardly likely to have stayed with any of the Lloyd family. The attack on Gifford was probably the following sonnet, printed in *The Examiner* for October 3 and 4, 1819:—

ST. CRISPIN TO MR. GIFFORD

All unadvised, and in an evil hour,
  Lured by aspiring thoughts, my son, you daft
  The lowly labours of the Gentle Craft
For learned toils, which blood and spirits sour.
All things, dear pledge, are not in all men's power;
  The wiser sort of shrub affects the ground;
  And sweet content of mind is oftener found
In cobbler's parlour, than in critic's bower.
The sorest work is what doth cross the grain;
  And better to this hour you had been plying
  The obsequious awl with well-waxed finger flying,
Than ceaseless thus to till a thankless vein;
  Still teazing Muses, which are still denying;
Making a stretching-leather of your brain.]

LETTER 231

CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Monday, Oct. 26th, 1818.

DEAR Southey,—I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one; but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall Street, and if it hold out as long as the "foundations of our empire in the East," I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent; but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil; but after all one feels so welcome at one's own house. Have you seen poor Miss Betham's "Vignettes"? Some of them, the second particularly, "To Lucy," are sweet and

good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all. C. L.

NOTE

[The letter treats of Lamb's *Works*, just published. Matilda Betham followed up *The Lay of Marie* with a volume entitled *Vignettes*.

"I am *better than I deserve*." Why Lamb underlined these words I do not know, but it may have been a quotation from Coleridge. Carlyle in his account of his visit to Coleridge at Highgate (in the *Life of John Sterling*) puts it into Coleridge's mouth in connection with a lukewarm cup of tea.]

LETTER 232

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Dec. 24th, 1818.

MY dear Coleridge,—I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy. . . .[1] You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little; but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week*; I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mahomet, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3rd January, 1819—shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old out-goer;—how the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

Believe me ever yours, C. LAMB.

I have but one holiday, which is Christmas-day itself nakedly: no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's day, Holy Innocents

[1] [Canon Ainger supplies the four missing words: "which has utterly failed."]

&c., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in this candle-light fog-den at Leadheall.

NOTE

[The ticket was for a new course of lectures, either on the History of Philosophy, or Six Plays of Shakespeare, both of which began in December, 1818, and continued into 1819.

Kenney's new farce was "A Word for the Ladies," produced at Covent Garden on December 17.

"To catch a skirt of the old out-goer." A reference to Coleridge's line—

I saw the skirts of the departing year.

"*Improbe labor!*" Virgil (*Georgics*, I., 145-146) has—

Labor omnia vincit
Improbus
(Persevering labour overcomes everything);

or more likely perhaps an incorrect recollection of *Æneid*, IV., 412, "Improbe amor."

Somewhere at this point should come a delightful letter from Lamb to John Chambers. John Chambers was the brother of Charles Chambers (see note on page 682). He was a colleague of Lamb's at the India House (see the *Elia* essay "The Superannuated Man"), and survived until 1872. It was to John Chambers that Lamb made the remark that he (Lamb) was probably the only man in England who had never worn boots and never ridden a horse. The letter, which is concerned with the peculiarities of India House clerks, is famous for the remark on Tommy Bye, a fellow clerk at the India House, that "his sonnets are most like Petrarch of any foreign poet, or what we may suppose Petrarch would have written if Petrarch had been born a fool." We meet Bye again in the letter to Wordsworth on page 524. I can find no trace of his sonnets in book form. Possibly they were never published.]

LETTER 233

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[*This letter is written in black and red ink, changing with each line.*]

[P.M. April 26, 1819.]

DEAR Wordsworth, I received a copy of Peter Bell a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is

forced, and then the price. Sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean *your* Peter Bell, but *a* Peter Bell which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from supplementary preface to the Lyrical Balads. Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Then there is Rogers! he has been re-writing your Poem of the Stride, and publishing it at the end of his "Human Life." Tie him up to the Cart, hangman, while you are about it. Who started the spurious P. B. I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers—the vile Smiths—but I have heard no name mentioned. Peter Bell (not the mock one) is excellent. For its matter, I mean. I cannot say that the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. Heartleap Well is the tale for me, in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add the Waggoner? Have I thanked you, though, yet, for Peter Bell? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say any thing to him about it. He would only begin a very long story, with a very long face, and I see him far too seldom to teaze him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house, and when we go to see him, he is generally writing, or thinking he is writing, in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away. The mock P. B. had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find *some*thing diverting in it, I reach'd your two books off the shelf and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed. The two of your last edition, of course, I mean. And in the morning I awoke determining to take down the Excursion. I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond and fishing up a dead author whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary Bells. There is no Cock for such Peters. Damn 'em. I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse. I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D.—A. I am sure will value it and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as any bodie's, and god bless him, any bodie's as good as his own, for

I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The Gods by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excided Curiosity also, and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you—on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust, but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a Pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different Poetical Works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances, and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again wherever I found it, shaking the adherencies off—and by this means one Copy of "my Works" served for G. D. and with a little dusting was made over to my good friend Dr. Stoddart, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully, my Town acquaintance I mean. How do you like my way of writing with two Inks? I think it is pretty and mottley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you.

[*The ink differs with every word of the following paragraph* :—]

My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you and cause to thrive and to burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters. Yours truly CHARLES LAMB.

Mary's love.

NOTE

[The *Peter Bell* to which Lamb refers was written by John Hamilton Reynolds (1796-1852), the friend of Keats, and later Hood's brother-in-law. The parody is a travesty of Wordsworth generally rather than of *Peter Bell*, which had not then been published. James and Horace Smith, of the *Rejected Addresses*, which contained a parody of Wordsworth under the title "The Baby's Debut," had nothing to do with it. Lamb's indignation was shared by Coleridge, who wrote as follows to Taylor and Hessey, the publishers, on April 16, 1819, on the announcement of Reynolds' work :—

DEAR SIRS, I hope, nay I feel confident, that you will interpret this note in th' real sense—namely, as a proof of the esteem and respect which I entertain toward you both. Looking in the Times this morning I was startled by an advertisement of PETER BELL—a Lyrical Ballad—with a very significant motto from one of our Comedies of Charles the IInd's reign, tho' what it signifies I wish to ascertain. Peter Bell is a Poem of Mr. Wordsworth's—and I have not heard, that it has been published by him.—If it have, and with his name (I have reason to believe, that

he never published anonymously) and this now advertised be a ridicule on it—I have nothing to say—But if it have not, I have ventured to pledge myself for you, that you would not wittingly give the high respectability of your names to an attack on a *Manuscript* work, which no man could assail but by a base breach of trust.

It is stated in the article on Reynolds in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that Coleridge asserted positively that Lamb was the objectionable parodist; but this letter suggests that that was not so.

"Lambert Simnel"—one of the pretenders to the throne of Henry VII.

"*Peter Bell* (not the mock one)." Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, in the original MS., for June 6, 1812, contains this passage:—

With C. Lamb. Lent him Peter Bell. To my surprise he finds nothing in it good. He complains of the slowness of the narrative, as if that were not the *art* of the Poet. W. he says has great thoughts, but here are none of them. He has no interest in the Ass. These are to me inconceivable judgments from C. L. whose taste in general I acquiesce in and who is certainly an enthusiast for W.

Again, on May 11, 1819, after the poem was published, Robinson says:—

L. spoke of Peter Bell which he considers as one of the worst of Wordsworth's works. The lyric narrative L. has no taste for. He is disgusted by the introduction, which he deems puerile and the story he thinks ill told, though he allows the idea to be good.

"Rogers." At the end of Samuel Rogers' poem, *Human Life*, 1819, is a ballad, entitled "The Boy of Egremond," which has for subject the same incident as that in Wordsworth's "Force of Prayer"—beginning

What is good for a bootless bene?

—the death of the Young Romilly as he leapt across the Strid. In Wordsworth the answer to the question is "Endless sorrow." Rogers' poem begins:—

"Say what remains when hope is fled?"
She answered "Endless weeping."

Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* was published a week after the mock one. To *The Waggoner* we shall come shortly.

The significance of the allusion to Coleridge is not perfectly clear; but I imagine it to refer to the elaborate examination of Wordsworth's poetry in the *Biographia Literaria*.

"These obtuse literary Bells." Peter Bell, in the poem, sounds the river with his staff, and draws forth the dead body of the ass's master. Lamb passes, in his curse, to a reference to St. Peter.

"Taking my own again." This, if, as one may suppose, adapted from Molière's "Je reprendre mon bien partout où je le trouve," is an indication that Lamb knew the Frenchman's comedies.]

LETTER 234

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

May 28, 1819.

MY dear M.,—I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer.[1] How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

Hail, Mackeray End—

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further. The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known man and mad-man twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap; a little too fond of the creature—who isn't at times? but Tommy had not brains to work off an over-night's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning, and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superfœtation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament; some wretched calico that he had mopped his poor oozy front with had rendered up its native dye, and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page. He imagined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *non*sensorium. But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf; the gentle dews dropt not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. How is Ball? "Mr. B. is a P——." Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny Kelly is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. *Gold* is well, but proves "uncoined," as the lovers about Wheathampstead would say.

O hard hearted Burrell
With teeth like a squirrel—

[1] [See Appendix II., page 973.]

I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whit-Monday. What a reflection! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holiday in the fields a-Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk instead of your living trees! But then, again, I hate the Joskins, *a name for Hertfordshire bumpkins*. Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then, again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

A red-haired man has just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off, before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao. C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Manning, who had now settled in England, but in retirement, was living in Hertfordshire, at Totteridge. The Gladmans and Brutons are mentioned in the *Elia* essay "Mackery End in Hertfordshire":—

"The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farm-house,—delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the country, but the Fields are almost extinct."

The farm at Mackery End is now (1904) in other hands, but a Miss Sarah Bruton, the last of the flock, still lives at Wheathampstead.

Tommy Bye we saw in the abstract of the letter to Chambers on page 518.

"Over-night's surfeit"—Apemantus' phrase in "Timon," IV., 3, 227, "O'er-night's surfeit."

The Goblin Page is in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

"The quality of mercy was not strained"—from Portia's speech in "The Merchant of Venice" (IV., 1, 184).

"Mrs. *Gold* is well"—*née* Fanny Burrell (see note on page 513).

"This dead wood of the desk." Lamb used this figure more than once, in his letters and elsewhere. In the *Elia* essay "The Superannuated Man" he says: "I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul."]

LETTER 235

CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. June 7, 1819.]

MY dear Wordsworth, You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem—I mean all through—yet Benjamin is no common favorite—there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it—it is as good as it was in 1806—and will be as good in 1829 if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it.

Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication—but I will not enter into personal themes—else, substituting ******* **** for Ben, and the Honble United Company of Merchts trading to the East Indies for the Master of the misused Team, it might seem by no far fetched analogy to point its dim warnings hitherward—but I reject the omen—especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

Poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known (as I express'd it in a letter to Manning), man and mad man 27 years—he was my gossip in Leadenhall St.—but too much addicted to turn in at a red lattice—came wandering into his and my common scene of business—you have seen the orderly place—reeling drunk at nine o Clock—with his face of a deep blue, contracted by a filthy dowlas muckinger which had given up its dye to his poor oozy visnomy—and short to tell, after playing various pranks, laughing loud laughters three—mad explosions they were—in the following morning the "tear stood in his ee"—for he found his abused income of clear £600 inexorably reduced to £100—he was my dear gossip—alas! Benjamin! . . .

I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar (I do not mean to compare myself [to] *him*) by the command of Hiero, the Sicilian tyrant (was not he the tyrant of some place? fie

on my neglect of history—) conceive him by command of Hiero, or Perillus, set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean Panegyre in lines alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it—it would have been a strait laced torture to his muse, he would have call'd for the Bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas, or the Chorics (how do you like the word?) of Samson Agonistes, have been written with two inks. Your couplets with points, Epilogues to Mr. H.s, &c. might be even benefited by the twy-fount. Where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhime, I think the alternation would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre existence with 2 inks. Try another, and Rogers the Banker, with his silver standish having one ink only, I will bet my Ode on Tobacco, against the Pleasures of Memory—and Hope too—shall put more fervor of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two—he shall do it stans pede in uno as it were.

The Waggoner is very ill put up in boards, at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication—but that is a mechanical fault.

I re-read the White Doe of Rylston—the title should be always written at length—as Mary Sabilla Novello, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A—which makes me think, with some other triflings, that she understands something of human nature. My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of Two Inks.

Manning had just sent it home and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it, "I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsw^ths poem. I am got into the 3rd Canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed. ✠ 'Tis broad; noble; poetical; with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the bible, &c." —and so he goes on.

✠ N.B. M—— from his peregrinations is 12 or 14 years *behind* in his knowledge of who has or has not written good verse of late.

I do not know which I like best, the prologue (the latter part specially) to P. Bell, or the Epilogue to Benjamin. Yes, I tell stories, I do know. I like the last best, and the Waggoner altogether as a pleasanter remembrance to me than the Itinerant. If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so.

The sonnets are not all new to me. Of what are, the 9th I like best. Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favor done to

me, that, being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a dedi——

I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

If as you say, the Waggoner in some sort came at my call, O for a potent voice to call forth the Recluse from his profound Dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge The World.

Had I three inks I would invoke him!

Talfourd has written a most kind Review of J. Woodvil, &c., in the Champion. He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabbe Robinson gives me any dear Prints that I happen to admire, and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy, but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not chusing to part with my own. Mary's love. How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal?

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[Wordsworth had just put forth *The Waggoner*, which was dedicated to Lamb in the following terms:—

MY DEAR FRIEND—When I sent you, a few weeks ago, "The Tale of Peter Bell," you asked "Why 'The Waggoner' was not added?" To say the truth, from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended this little piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, "The Waggoner" was read to you in manuscript, and as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope that, since the localities on which the poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being, therefore, in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you, in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your writings, and of the high esteem with which

I am very truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The poem, which had been written many years before, tells the story of Benjamin, a waggoner in the Lake county, who one stormy night, succumbing to the temptations of the Cherry Tree Inn, fell from good estate. Lamb's asterisks stand, of course, for Charles Lamb.

"A tear stood in his ee." In the ballad of "Young Bekie" is the line

An' the tears was in his ee.

The phrase was probably a commonplace in the old minstrelsy.

Hiero I. was King of Syracuse and is celebrated by Pindar for his supremacy in the Olympian Games. The bull for which Pindar would have called was that devised by Perillus, the mechanic, for Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum, in which criminals were roasted to death.

"Your stanzas on pre existence"—the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."

The Pleasures of Hope was Campbell's poem.

Mary Sabilla Novello was the wife of Vincent Novello, the organist, and Lamb's friend.

The White Doe of Rylstone had been published in 1815.

The 9th sonnet. Certain sonnets had been published with *The Waggoner*. The 9th was that beginning:—

Grief, thou hast lost an ever ready Friend.

Wordsworth's sonnet upon Walton begins:—

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport.

The Recluse was not published until 1888, and then only Book I.

The Champion, in which Talfourd reviewed Lamb's *Works*, had now become the property of John Thelwall.]

LETTERS 236 AND 237

CHARLES LAMB TO FANNY KELLY

20 July, 1819.

DEAR Miss Kelly,—We had the pleasure, *pain* I might better call it, of seeing you last night in the new Play. It was a most consummate piece of Acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your Profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over occupied & hurried state.—But to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify for me making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those, for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, & come & be a reality to us? can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude,

who know nothing of you, & begin at last to live to yourself & your friends?

As plainly & frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once, that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind [was] once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousand fold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honor and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

In haste, but with entire respect & deepest affection, I subscribe myself C. Lamb.

Note

[It was known, on the authority of the late Mr. Charles Kent, that Fanny Kelly, the actress, had received an offer of marriage from Lamb; but my own impression was that it was made much later in life than this letter, first printed in 1903 by Mr. John Hollingshead, indicates. Miss Kelly, who at this time was engaged at the Lyceum, would be twenty-nine on October 15; Lamb was forty-four in February. His salary was now £600 a year.

Lamb had long admired Miss Kelly as an actress. In his *Works*, published in 1818, was this sonnet:—

TO MISS KELLY

You are not, Kelly, of the common strain,
That stoop their pride and female honour down
To please that many-headed beast *the town*,
And vend their lavish smiles and tricks for gain;
By fortune thrown amid the actors' train,
You keep your native dignity of thought;
The plaudits that attend you come unsought,
As tributes due unto your natural vein.
Your tears have passion in them, and a grace
Of genuine freshness, which our hearts avow;
Your smiles are winds whose ways we cannot trace,
That vanish and return we know not how—
And please the better from a pensive face,
And thoughtful eye, and a reflecting brow.

That Lamb had been pondering his offer for some little time is suggested, Mr. Macdonald remarks, by a passage in one of his articles on Miss Kelly in *The Examiner* earlier in this

month, where he says of her as Rachel, in "The Jovial Crew," probably with full knowledge that it would meet her eye and be understood (a truly Elian method of love-lettering), "'What a lass that were,' said a stranger who sate beside us . . . 'to go a gipseying through the world with.'"

This was Miss Kelly's reply:—

Henrietta Street, July 20th, 1819.

An early & deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it but while I thus *frankly* & decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honour which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me—let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will end with this letter, & that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much & so often to my advantage and gratification.

Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself

Your obliged friend

F. M. KELLY.

Lamb at once wrote again, as follows:—]

CHARLES LAMB TO FANNY KELLY

July 20th, 1819.

DEAR Miss Kelly,—*Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle.* I feel myself in a lackadaisacal no-how-ish kind of a humour. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns & *that* nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? let what has past "break no bones" between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them?

Yours very truly,

C. L.

Do you observe the delicacy of not signing my full name? N.B. Do not paste that last letter of mine into your Book.

NOTE

[Writing again of Miss Kelly, in the "Hypocrite," in *The Examiner* of August 1 and 2, Lamb says: "She is in truth not framed to tease or torment even in jest, but to utter a hearty *Yes* or *No;* to yield or refuse assent with a noble sincerity. We have not the pleasure of being acquainted with her, but we have been told that she carries the same cordial manners into private life."

Miss Kelly died unmarried at the age of ninety-two.

"Break no bones." Here Lamb makes one of his puns. By "bones" he meant also the little ivory discs which were given to

friends of the management, entitling them to free entry to the theatre. With this explanation the next sentence of the letter becomes clear.

See Appendix II., page 973, for a letter to S. J. Arnold.]

LETTER 238

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date. ? Summer, 1819.]

DR C. Your sonnet is capital. The Paper ingenious, only that it split into 4 parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English Paper, *manufactured of rags*, for better preservation. I never knew before how the Iliad and Odyssey were written. Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up and listen to the Kettle, and then PURR, which is their Poetry.

On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

With remembces to your good Host and Hostess

Yours ever

C. LAMB.

NOTE

[The sonnet was Coleridge's "Fancy in Nubibus; or, The Poet in the Clouds," printed in *Blackwood*, November, 1819, but now sent to Lamb in manuscript, apparently on some curious kind of paper.

This is the sonnet:—

O! it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or, list'ning to the tide, with closèd sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

See Letter 243 on page 537.

Possibly it is to this summer that an undated note to Crabb Robinson belongs (in the Dr. Williams' Library) in which Lamb says they are setting out to see Lord Braybrooke's house at Audley End.]

LETTER 239

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS HOLCROFT, Jr.

[No date. Autumn, 1819.]

DR Tom, Do not come to us on Thursday, for we are moved into country lodgings, tho' I am still at the India house in the mornings. See Marshall and Captain Betham *as soon as ever you can*. I fear leave cannot be obtained at the India house for your going to India. If you go it must be as captain's clerk, if such a thing could be obtain'd.

For God's sake keep your present place and do not give it up, or neglect it; as you perhaps will not be able to go to India, and you see how difficult of attainment situations are.

Yours truly

C. Lamb.

Note

[Thomas Holcroft was the son of Lamb's friend, the dramatist. Apparently he did not take Lamb's advice, for he lost his place, which was some small Parliamentary post under John Rickman, in November, 1819. Crabb Robinson, Anthony Robinson and Lamb took up the matter and subscribed money, and Holcroft went out to India.]

LETTERS 240 AND 241

CHARLES LAMB TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[Dated at end: Nov. 5, 1819.]

DEAR Sir—It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear that you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was one day at Bristol, I made an effort to see you, but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied, to accompany a selection of "Likenesses of Living Bards"

which a most particular friend of mine is making. If you have no objections, and could oblige me by transmitting such portrait to me at No. 44 Russell Street, Covent Garden, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, and returning it safely the instant the Copier has done with it. I hope you will pardon the liberty

From an old friend

and well-wisher,

CHARLES LAMB.

London 5th Nov. 1819.

NOTE

[Lamb's visit to Bristol was made probably when he was staying at Calne with the Morgans in 1816. The present letter refers to an extra illustrated copy of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which was being made by William Evans, of *The Pamphleteer*, and which is now in the British Museum. Owing to Cottle's hostility to Byron, and Byron's scorn of Cottle, Lamb could hardly explain the nature of the book more fully. See note to the following letter.]

CHARLES LAMB TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[Not dated. ? Late 1819.]

DEAR Sir—My friend whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture, having had it very exactly copied (and a very spirited Drawing it is, as every one thinks that has seen it—the copy is not much inferior, done by a daughter of Josephs, R.A.)—he purposes sending you back the original, which I must accompany with my warm thanks, both for that, and your better favor, the "Messiah," which, I assure you, I have read thro' with great pleasure; the verses have great sweetness and a New Testament-plainness about them which affected me very much.

I could just wish that in page 63 you had omitted the lines 71 and '2, and had ended the period with

> "The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound—
> *When* to be heard again on Earthly ground?"—

two very sweet lines, and the sense perfect.

And in page 154, line 68, "I come *ordained a world to save*," —these words are hardly borne out by the story, and seem scarce accordant with the modesty with which our Lord came to take his common portion among the Baptismal Candidates. They also anticipate the beauty of John's recognition of the Messiah, and the subsequent confirmation from the voice and Dove.

You will excuse the remarks of an old brother bard, whose career, though long since pretty well stopt, was coeval in its beginning with your own, and who is sorry his lot has been always to be so distant from you. It is not likely that C. L. will ever see Bristol again; but, if J. C. should ever visit London, he will be a most welcome visitor to C. L.

My sister joins in cordial remembrances and I request the favor of knowing, at your earliest opportunity, whether the Portrait arrives safe, the glass unbroken &c. Your glass broke in its coming.

Morgan is a little better—can read a little, &c.; but cannot join Mrs. M. till the Insolvent Act (or whatever it is called) takes place. Then, I hope, he will stand clear of all debts. Meantime, he has a most exemplary nurse and kind Companion in Miss Brent.

Once more, Dr Sir,

Yours truly

C. Lamb.

Note

[Cottle sent Lamb a miniature of himself by Branwhite, which had been copied in monochrome for Mr. Evans' book. G. J. Joseph, A.R.A., made a coloured drawing of Lamb for the same work. It serves as frontispiece to Vol. I. of the present edition. Byron's lines refer as a matter of fact not to Joseph but to Amos Cottle:—

O, Amos Cottle!—Phœbus! what a name.

and so forth. Mr. Evans, however, dispensed with Amos. Another grangerised edition of the same satire, also in the British Museum, compiled by W. M. Tartt, has an engraving of Amos Cottle and two portraits of Lamb—the Hancock drawing, and the Brook Pulham caricature. Byron's lines touching Lamb ran thus:—

Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop,
The meanest object of the lowly group,
Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,
Seems blessed harmony to Lambe and Lloyd.

A footnote states that Lamb and Lloyd are the most ignoble followers of Southey & Co.

Cottle's *Messiah*, of which the earlier portion had been published long since, was completed in 1815. Canon Ainger says that lines 71 and 72 in Lamb's copy (not that of 1815), following upon the couplet quoted, were:—

(While sorrow gave th' involuntary tear)
Had ceased to vibrate on our listening ear.

Coleridge's friend Morgan had just come upon evil times. Subsequently Lamb and Southey united in helping him to the extent of £10 a year each.]

LETTER 242

CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 25 Nov., 1819.]

DEAR Miss Wordsworth, You will think me negligent, but I wanted to see more of Willy, before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—Virgilium Tantum Vidi—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart—and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant nor bookworm, so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the "natural sprouts of his own." But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's bon mots, but the following are a few. Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least, which was a Touch of the Comparative, but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a Political Economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week Toll. Like a curious naturalist he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question as to the flux and reflux, which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle Mary, who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day, he sagely replied, "Then it must come to the same thing at last" which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The Lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard. So impossible it is for Nature in any of her works to come up to the standard of a child's imagination. The whelps (Lionets) he was sorry to find were dead, and on particular enquiry his old friend the Ouran Outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand Tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another—or none. But again, there was a Golden Eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative, for being at play at Tricktrack (a kind of minor Billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, "I cannot hit that beast". Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term, a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation, a something where the two ends, of the brute matter (ivory) and their human and rather violent

personification into *men*, might meet, as I take it, illustrative of that Excellent remark in a certain Preface about Imagination, explaining "like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself." Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come ex traduce. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him. For being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answer'd that he did not know.

It is hard to discern the Oak in the Acorn, or a Temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid, nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly. As in the Trick-track board, where the hits are figured, at first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22, but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25—and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion, as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside, and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of scull certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time the trier of geniuses must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-mannerd child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him. Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall. Your's and yours' most sincerely C. LAMB.

NOTE

[This letter, which refers to a visit paid to the Lambs in Great Russell Street by Wordsworth's son, William, then nine years old, is remarkable, apart from its charm and humour, for containing more of the absolute method of certain of Lamb's *Elia* passages than anything he had yet written.

"*Virgilium tantum vidi*" (Ovid, *Trist.*, IV., 10, 51)—"Virgil I saw and no more." The same quotation is in the *Elia* essay "Amicus Redivivus."

"Lord Foppington"—in Vanbrugh's "Relapse." Lamb used this speech as the motto of his *Elia* essay "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading."

"Halley"—Edmund Halley (1656-1742), the astronomer.

"The Lion in the 'Change"—Exeter Change.

"Arride." A favourite old word with Lamb. To gratify, to delight. From *ar* = *ad*, to; and *ridere* to laugh.

"Like a sea-beast." Lamb alludes to the preface to the edition of 1815 of Wordsworth's poems, where he quotes illustratively from his "Resolution and Independence":—

> Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
> Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself.

"If his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge." An allusion to Wordsworth's sonnet "Composed on Westminster Bridge":—

> Earth has not anything to show more fair.

"The American boy." This was Zerah Colburn, the mathematical prodigy, born in Vermont State in 1804 and exhibited in America and Europe by his father.]

LETTER 243

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Jan. 10th, 1820.

DEAR Coleridge,—A Letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, Clerk's Blood. Damn 'em! my brain, guts, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, TIME, is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of Lloyd's lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad Tattler, but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but never could regain since; he almost alienated you (also) from me, or me from you, I don't know which. But that breach is closed. The dreary sea is filled up. He has lately been at work "telling again," as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and (not a friend exactly, but) [an] intimate acquaintance. I suspect, also, he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday, and better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad. Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's or any other magazine passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, you know best. I have no

quarrel with you about præprandial avocations—so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be Procter's. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly Poetaster pours forth! Who put your marine sonnet and about Browne into "Blackwood"? I did not. So no more, till we meet.

Ever yours, C. L.

NOTE

[Charles Lloyd, returned to health, had written *Desultory Thoughts in London*, in which both Coleridge and Lamb appeared, Coleridge as *** and Lamb as **. The poem was published in 1821. Lloyd probably had sent it in manuscript or proof to Lamb and Coleridge. Some of Lloyd's lines on Coleridge run thus:—

How shall I fitly speak on such a theme?
He is a treasure by the world neglected,
Because he hath not, with a prescience dim,
Like those whose every aim is self-reflected,
Pil'd up some fastuous trophy, that of him
Might tell, what mighty powers the age rejected,
But taught his lips the office of a *pen*—
By fools he's deem'd a being lost to men.

. . . . . .

No! with magnanimous self-sacrifice,
And lofty inadvertency of fame,
He felt there is a bliss in *being* wise,
Quite independent of the wise man's *name*.
Who now can say how many a soul may rise
To a nobility of moral aim
It ne'er had known, but for that spirit brave,
Which, being freely gifted, freely gave?

Sometimes I think that I'm a blossom blighted;
But this I ken, that should it not prove so,
If I am not inexorably spited
Of all that dignifies mankind below;
By him I speak of, I was so excited,
While reason's scale was poising to and fro,
"To the better cause;" that him I have to bless
For that which it is comfort to possess.

. . . . . .

No! Those who most have seen me, since the hour
When thou and I, in former happier days,
Frank converse held, though many an adverse power
Have sought the memory of those times to raze,
Can vouch that more it stirs me (thus a tower,
Sole remnant of vast castle, still betrays
Haply its former splendour) to have prov'd
Thy love, than by fresh friends to have been lov'd.

The story of one of Lloyd's former indiscretions is told in the earlier letters of this collection. I cannot say what friend he quite

alienated, unless it was James White (see Letter No. 32). The nature of the later offence of which Lamb accuses Lloyd is now unknown.

"Dreary sea." From *Christabel* :—

A dreary sea now flows between.

Line 423.

"As Strap says." In *Roderick Random*.

"That Manchester sonnet." A sonnet entitled "Manchester," referring to the Luddites, and signed C. L., by Capel Lofft. Procter's "C. L." sonnet was upon Macready.

The marine sonnet was "Fancy in Nubibus" (see page 530). "About Browne" refers to a note by Coleridge on Sir Thomas Browne in the same number, signed G. J.—possibly James Gillman's initials reversed.

We learn from a letter from Coleridge to J. H. Green (January 14, 1820) that the visit to Highgate which Lamb mentions was a New Year visit of annual occurrence. Lamb's reference to præprandial avocations touches upon Coleridge's habit of coming down to see his guests only when dinner was ready.]

LETTER 244

MARY LAMB TO MRS. VINCENT NOVELLO

Newington, Monday.
[Spring of 1820.]

MY dear Friend,—Since we heard of your sad sorrow, you have been perpetually in our thoughts; therefore, you may well imagine how welcome your kind remembrance of it must be. I know not how enough to thank you for it. You bid me write a long letter; but my mind is so possessed with the idea that you must be occupied with one only thought, that all trivial matters seem impertinent. I have just been reading again Mr. Hunt's delicious Essay; which I am sure must have come so home to your hearts, I shall always love him for it. I feel that it is all that one can think, but which none but he could have done so prettily. May he lose the memory of his own babies in seeing them all grow old around him! Together with the recollection of your dear baby, the image of a little sister I once had comes as fresh into my mind as if I had seen her as lately. A little cap with white satin ribbon, grown yellow with long keeping, and a lock of light hair, were the only relics left of her. The sight of them always brought her pretty, fair face to my view, that to this day I seem to have a

perfect recollection of her features. I long to see you, and I hope to do so on Tuesday or Wednesday in next week. Percy Street! I love to write the word; what comfortable ideas it brings with it! We have been pleasing ourselves ever since we heard this piece of unexpected good news with the anticipation of frequent drop-in visits, and all the social comfort of what seems almost next-door neighbourhood.

Our solitary confinement has answered its purpose even better than I expected. It is so many years since I have been out of town in the Spring, that I scarcely knew of the existence of such a season. I see every day some new flower peeping out of the ground, and watch its growth; so that I have a sort of an intimate friendship with each. I know the effect of every change of weather upon them—have learned all their names, the duration of their lives, and the whole progress of their domestic economy. My landlady, a nice, active old soul that wants but one year of eighty, and her daughter, a rather aged young gentlewoman, are the only labourers in a pretty large garden; for it is a double house, and two long strips of ground are laid into one, well stored with fruit-trees, which will be in full blossom the week after I am gone, and flowers, as many as can be crammed in, of all sorts and kinds. But flowers are flowers still; and I must confess I would rather live in Russell Street all my life, and never set my foot but on the London pavement, than be doomed always to enjoy the silent pleasures I now do. We go to bed at ten o'clock. Late hours are life-shortening things; but I would rather run all risks, and sit every night—at some places I could name—wishing in vain at eleven o'clock for the entrance of the supper tray, than be always up and alive at eight o'clock breakfast, as I am here. We have a scheme to reconcile these things. We have an offer of a very low-rented lodging a mile nearer town than this. Our notion is, to divide our time, in alternate weeks, between quiet rest and dear London weariness. We give an answer to-morrow; but what that will be, at this present writing, I am unable to say. In the present state of our undecided opinion, a very heavy rain that is now falling may turn the scale. "Dear rain, do go away," and let us have a fine cheerful sunset to argue the matter fairly in. My brother walked seventeen miles yesterday before dinner. And notwithstanding his long walk to and from the office, we walk every evening; but I by no means perform in this way so well as I used to do. A twelve-mile walk one hot Sunday morning made my feet blister, and they are hardlywell now. Charles is not yet come home; but he bid me, with many thanks, to present his *love* to you and all yours, to all whom and to each individually, and to Mr. Novello in particular, I beg to add mine. With the sincerest wishes for the health and

happiness of all, believe me, ever, dear Mary Sabilla, your most affectionate friend,

MARY ANN LAMB.

NOTE

[Leigh Hunt's essay "Deaths of Little Children" appeared in *The Indicator* for April 5, 1820; it was suggested by the same loss as that which prompted Mary Lamb's letter.

The address Newington is a little confusing. The Lambs, we know from Letter 220, on page 490, had taken summer lodgings at Dalston. Newington is a mile farther out rather than nearer London. As there is no doubt that the year of the letter is correct, we must suppose that the Lambs had left Dalston for a while for Newington, only to return to it, as we know from several later letters dated from 14 Kingsland Row.]

LETTER 245

CHARLES LAMB TO JOSEPH COTTLE

London, India House,
[? May 26th, 1820.]

MY dear Sir,—I am quite ashamed of not having acknowledged your kind present earlier, but that unknown something, which was never yet discovered, though so often speculated upon, which stands in the way of lazy folks answering letters, has presented its usual obstacle. It is not forgetfulness, nor disrespect, nor incivility, but terribly like all these bad things.

I have been in my time a great epistolary scribbler; but the passion, and with it the facility, at length wears out; and it must be pumped up again by the heavy machinery of duty or gratitude, when it should run free.

I have read your "Fall of Cambria" with as much pleasure as I did your "Messiah." Your Cambrian poem I shall be tempted to repeat oftenest, as Human poems take me in a mood more frequently congenial than Divine. The character of Llewellyn pleases me more than any thing else, perhaps; and then some of the Lyrical Pieces are fine varieties.

It was quite a mistake that I could dislike anything you should write against Lord Byron, for I have a thorough aversion to his character and a very moderate admiration of his genius; he is great in so little a way. To be a poet is to be the man—not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up into a permanent

form of humanity. Shakespear has thrust such rubbishy feelings into a corner—the dark, dusky heart of Don John, in the *Much Ado about Nothing*. The fact is, I have not seen your "Expostulatory Epistle" to him. I was not aware, till your question, that it was out. I shall inquire, and get it forthwith.

Southey is in town, whom I have seen slightly; Wordsworth expected, whom I hope to see much of. I write with accelerated motion; for I have two or three bothering clerks and brokers about me, who always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely, but I think you do not like swearing.

I conclude, begging you to consider that I feel myself much obliged by your kindness, and shall be most happy at any and at all times to hear from you.

Dear Sir, yours truly, CHARLES LAMB.

NOTE

[Joseph Cottle, the Bristol publisher, had apparently just sent Lamb a copy of his *Fall of Cambria*, although it had been published some years before. Perhaps Lamb had sent him his *Works*, and it was a return gift. Cottle's very serious *Expostulatory Epistle to Lord Byron* (who had cast ridicule upon him and his brother in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*) was issued in 1820, after the publication of *Don Juan* had begun.

Southey arrived in London on May Day, 1820. Wordsworth followed early in June.]

LETTER 246

CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

(Incomplete)

[May 25, 1820.]

DEAR Miss W.—There can be none to whom the last volume of W. W. has come more welcome than to me. I have traced the Duddon in thought and with repetition along the banks (alas!) of the Lea—(unpoetical name); it is always flowing and murmuring and dashing in my ears. The story of *Dion* is divine—the genius of Plato falling on him like moonlight—the finest thing ever expressed. Then there is *Elidure* and *Kirkstone Pass*—the last not new to me—and let me add one of the sweetest of them all to me,

The Longest Day. Loving all these as much as I can love poetry new to me, what could I wish or desire more or extravagantly in a new volume? That I did not write to W. W. was simply that he was to come so soon, and that flattens letters. . . .

Yours, C. L.

NOTE

[I print from Professor Knight's text, in his *Life of Wordsworth*. Canon Ainger supplies omissions—a reference to Martin Burney's black eye.

The Wordsworths were in town this summer, to attend the wedding of Thomas Monkhouse and Miss Horrocks. We know from Crabb Robinson's *Diary* that they were at Lamb's on June 2: "Not much was said about his [W. W.'s] new volume of poems. But he himself spoke of the 'Brownie's Cell' as his favourite." The new volume was *The River Duddon, a Series of Sonnets*, . . . 1820. "The Longest Day" begins:—

Let us quit the leafy arbour.

Between this letter and the next Lamb wrote and sent off his first contribution to the *London Magazine* over the signature Elia—"The South-Sea House," which was printed in the number for August, 1820.

Here should come a letter to Allsop. See Appendix II., page 973.]

LETTER 247

CHARLES LAMB TO BARRON FIELD

London, 16 Aug., 1820.

DEAR Field,—Captain Ogilvie, who conveys this note to you, and is now paying for the first time a visit to your remote shores, is the brother of a Gentleman intimately connected with the family of the *Whites*, I mean of Bishopsgate Street—and you will much oblige them and myself by any service or civilities you can shew him.

I do not mean this for an answer to your warm-hearted Epistle, which demands and shall have a much fuller return. We receiped your Australian First Fruits, of which I shall say nothing here, but refer you to **** of the *Examiner*, who speaks our mind on all public subjects. I can only assure you that both Coleridge and

Wordsworth, and also C. Lloyd, who has lately reappeared in the poetical horizon, were hugely taken with your Kangaroo.

When do you come back full of riches and renown, with the regret of all the honest, and all the other part of the colony? Mary swears she shall live to see it.

Pray are you King's or Queen's men in Sidney? Or have thieves no politics? Man, don't let this lie about your room for your bed sweeper or Major Domo to see, he mayn't like the last paragraph.

This is a dull and lifeless scroll. You shall have soon a tissue of truth and fiction impossible to be extricated, the interleavings shall be so delicate, the partitions perfectly invisible, it shall puzzle you till you return, & [then] I will not explain it. Till then a . . . adieu, with kind rembrces. of me both to you & . . . [*Signature and a few words torn off.*]

NOTE

[Barron Field, who was still in New South Wales, had published his poems under the title *First-Fruits of Australian Poetry*, and Lamb had reviewed them in *The Examiner* for January 16, 1820, over his usual signature in that paper, * * * *. "The Kangaroo" is quoted in that review (see Vol. I. of the present edition, page 199).

Captain Ogilvie was the brother of a clerk at the India House, who gave Mr. Joseph H. Twichell some reminiscences of Lamb, which were printed in *Scribner's Magazine*.

"King's or Queen's men"—supporters of George IV. or Caroline of Brunswick. Lamb was very strongly in favour of the Queen, as his *Champion* epigrams show (see Vol. V.).

"You shall soon see." Lamb's first reference to the *Elia* essays, alluding here to "The South-Sea House."

Here should come a letter from Lamb to Hazlitt, not available for this edition, printed by Mr. Hazlitt in his edition of the letters in Bohn's library. Lamb says that his sister is ill again and that the last thing she read was Hazlitt's "Thursday Nights" which gave her unmixed delight—the reference being to the second part of the essay "On the Conversation of Authors," which was printed in the *London Magazine* for September, 1820, describing Lamb's evenings. Stoddart, Hazlitt's brother-in-law, Lamb adds, says it is better than Hogarth's "Modern Midnight Conversation."]

LETTER 248

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date. ? Autumn, 1820.]

DEAR C.,—Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid Becky brought me a dirty bit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was "Luster's Tables," which, for some time, I could not make out. "What! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky?" "No, it wasn't any tables, but it was a book that he called Luster's Tables." I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, C., you should not have taken away, for it is not mine; it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress;" but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learneder clerks than I. So I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c.?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them; I charge no warehouse-room for my friends' commodities; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy; there's a copy of More's fine poem, which is none of mine; but I cherish it as my own; I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book; I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard, but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by

Hartley; or he can bring that, and you the "Polemical Discourses," and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four—men and books I mean—my third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

Your wronged friend, C. LAMB.

NOTE

[This letter is usually dated 1824, but I think it was written earlier. For one reason, Hartley Coleridge was not in London in that year, and for another, there are several phrases in the *Elia* essay "Two Races of Men" (printed in the *London Magazine*, December, 1820) that are so similar to some in this letter that I imagine the letter to have suggested the subject of the essay, the composition of which immediately followed it. Thus, in the essay we read:—

"That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out—(you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, reader!)——with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventuræ*, choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser calibre,—Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas), showed but as dwarfs,—itself an Ascapart!—*that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that 'the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance) is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same.' Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?"

"Luster's Tables"—Luther's *Table Talk*.

"Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate." The proselyte of the gate—that is the stranger—was only partly admitted to Judaism. The proselyte of righteousness, that is to say, of conviction rather than convenience, was a true Hebrew.

"More's fine poem." The *Psychozoia Platonica*, 1642, of Henry More, the Platonist. Lamb seems to have returned the book, for it was not among his books that he left. Luther's *Table Talk* seems also to have been given up.

"The *Polemical Discourses*"—by Jeremy Taylor.]

LETTER 249

CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. January 8, 1821.]

Mary perfectly approves of the appropriatn of the *feathers*, and wishes them Peacocks for your fair niece's sake!

DEAR Miss Wordsworth, I had just written the above endearing words when Monkhouse tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pye, which I was not Bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M. I am most happy to say is better. Mary has been tormented with a Rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcase holds it out. I have play'd the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy shall be welcome to a mince pye, and a bout at Commerce, whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations. Everybody likes them, except the Author of the Pleasures of Hope. Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews. The Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge, a portrait of Cromwell at Sidney, and a better of Dr. Harvey (who found out that blood was red) at Dr. Davy's. You should see them.

Coleridge is pretty well, I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Alsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week. I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten Butcher's meat, as Plebeian. Are you not glad the Cold is gone? I find winters not so agreeable as they used to be, when "winter bleak had charms for me." I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes—Let them keep to Twelfth Cakes.

Mrs. Paris, our Cambridge friend, has been in Town. You do not know the Watfords? in Trumpington Street—they are capital people.

Ask any body you meet, who is the biggest woman in Cambridge —and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. Smith.

She broke down two benches in Trinity Gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the societies as to repairing it. In warm weather she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!) and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some 20 years back. She sits in a room with opposite

doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends toothaches. She is to be seen in the market every morning at 10, cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge Poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

Having now answered most of the points containd in your Letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary from not handling the Pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish Letter. C. L.

NOTE

[Miss Wordsworth was visiting her brother, Christopher Wordsworth, the Master of Trinity.

Willy was William Wordsworth, junr.

Lamb's New Year speculations were contained in his *Elia* essay "New Year's Eve," in the *London Magazine* for January, 1821. There is no evidence that Campbell disapproved of the essay. Canon Ainger suggests that Lamb may have thus alluded playfully to the pessimism of his remarks, so opposed to the pleasures of hope. When the *Quarterly* did "come in," in 1823, it was with cold words, as we shall see.

"Salute Trinity Library." It is here that are preserved those MSS. of Milton, which Lamb regretted to have seen in his essay "Oxford in the Vacation," in the *London Magazine* for October, 1820.

"Cromwell at Sidney." See Letter 211.

"Harvey . . . at Dr. Davy's"—Dr. Martin Davy, Master of Caius.

"Alsop." This is the first mention of Thomas Allsop (1795-1880), Coleridge's friend and disciple, who, meeting Coleridge in 1818, had just come into Lamb's circle. We shall meet him frequently. Allsop's *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* contain much matter concerning Lamb.

"Winter bleak had charms for me." I have not found this. Thomson's *Seasons* ("Autumn") has—

E'en winter wild to him is full of bliss.

Mrs. Paris was a sister of William Ayrton and the mother of John Ayrton Paris, the physician. It was at her house at Cambridge that the Lambs met Emma Isola, whom we are soon to meet (see Letter 253).

"Mrs. Smith." Lamb worked up this portion of his letter into the little humorous sketch "The Gentle Giantess," printed in the *London Magazine* for December, 1822 (see Vol. I. of the present

edition, page 211), wherein Mrs. Smith of Cambridge becomes the Widow Blacket of Oxford.

"Dr. W."—Dr. Christopher Wordsworth.]

LETTERS 250 AND 251

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[No date. ? 1821.]

DEAR Sir—The *hairs* of our head are numbered, but those which emanate from your heart defy arithmetic. I would send longer thanks but your young man is blowing his fingers in the Passage.

Yours gratefully
C. L.

NOTE

[The date of this scrap is unimportant; but it comes well here in connection with the reference in the preceding letter.

In *Harper's Magazine* for December, 1859, were printed fifty of Lamb's notes to Allsop, all of which are reproduced in at least two editions of Lamb's letters. I have selected only those which say anything, as for the most part Lamb was content with the merest message; moreover, the date is often so uncertain as to be only misleading. Letter 251 is, I fear, here out of place. Lamb was not at Dalston in the winter.

Crabb Robinson says of Allsop, "I believe his acquaintance with Lamb originated in his sending Coleridge a present of £100 in admiration of his genius."]

CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[No date. ? 1821.]

DR Sir—Thanks for the Birds and your kindness. It was but yesterdy. I was contriving with Talfd to meet you ½ way at his chamber. But night don't do so well at present. I shall want to be home at Dalston by Eight.

I will pay an afternoon visit to you when you please. I dine at a chop-house at ONE always, but I can spend an hour with you after that.

Yours truly
C. L.

Would Saturdy serve?

END OF VOL. VI.

THE WORKS OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

EDITED BY

E. V. LUCAS

VOLUME VI.

LETTERS

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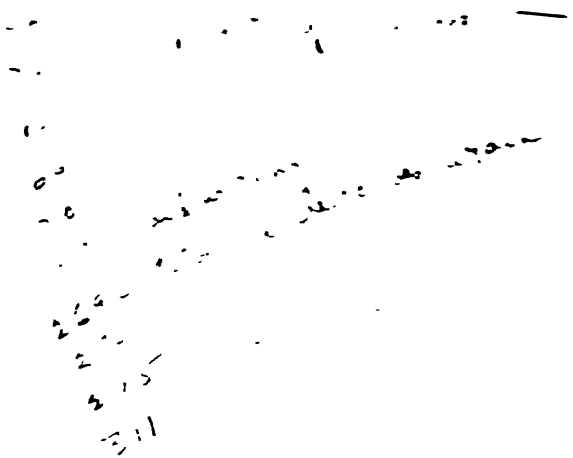

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